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**RENAISSANCE AND REACTION
IN NINETEENTH CENTURY BENGAL :
BANKIM CHANDRA CHATTOPADHYAY**

**RENAISSANCE & REACTION
IN NINETEENTH
CENTURY BENGAL :
BANKIM CHANDRA CHATTOPADHYAY**

*An English translation of the Bengali Essay SAMYA
written by Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, the father of
Indian Nationalism.*

Translated with an Introduction
by
M. K. HALDAR



INDIA

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TO
SHYAMALIKA

*When she grows up, she may read
what thoughts worried some of her father's generation*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

THE PRESENT translation of Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay's Bengali essay *Samya* was published in the *Radical Humanist*, a monthly from New Delhi, edited by V. M. Tarkunde.

Soon after its publication many of my friends asked me to bring out the translation in book form. But the opportunity to write the first draft of the Introduction came only when I was awarded a Leverhulme Foundation Fellowship and with that Fellowship an opportunity of visiting the University of Western Australia, Perth. Dr. R. N. Ghosh and his wife Mrs. Surekha Ghosh, Dr. Wayne T. Frank, Dr. Jerry Murray, all of the University of Western Australia, have helped me in preparing the first draft. Mr. Sourin Roy, former Deputy Director of National Archives, India, Dr. Sisir Das, Reader in Bengali, University of Delhi and numerous other colleagues in the University of Delhi have helped me with their incisive comments on the draft. My esteemed friend, Sitangshu Chatterjee, has laboriously gone through the typescript and has always been very helpful with his constructive criticism. But for my wife the draft would have gone to the Press with more mistakes than it has now. My friend Sushil Mukherjea of Minerva Associates (Publications) has shown remarkable enterprise by agreeing to publish this book.

Delhi
26 January 1977

M. K. Haldar

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INTRODUCTION

I. BANKIM CHANDRA : HIS SOCIAL MATRIX

BANKIMCHANDRA CHATTOPADHYAYA was born at Kanthalpara in West Bengal on the 26th of June, 1838. His father, Jadavchandra Chattopadhyaya, knew English and Persian, retired as Deputy Collector in the year 1857 and died in January, 1881, at the age of 87.

Bankim took his B.A. degree from the University of Calcutta in April, 1858. He was among the first 13 students who took the examination of the newly founded University. Out of the 13 students only two were placed in the Second Class and none got First Class. Bankim stood first in the examination and Jadunath Bose stood second. In the minutes of the newly founded Calcutta University Syndicate, dated 24th April 1858, we read :

Read in a letter from the University Board of Examiners in Arts, stating that of the 13 candidates for the degree of B.A. three had been absent during the whole, or a portion of the Examination, and that of the others, all had failed.

Read also a letter from the like Board, recommending, that, two candidates, viz., Bankim Chunder Chatterjee and Judoonath Bose who had passed creditably in five of the six subjects, and had failed by not more than seven marks in the sixth, might, as a special act of grace, be allowed to have their degrees, being placed in the second division, it being clearly understood that such favour should, in no case, be regarded as a precedent in future years.

Resolved:—That the two candidates mentioned, be admitted to the degree of B.A.

He was examined in the following subjects: English, Greek and Latin, Sanskrit, Bengali, Hindee and Oriya, History and Geography, Mathematics and Natural Philosophy, Natural History and Physical Sciences, Mental and Moral Sciences. On the 6th of August, 1858 the Lt. Governor of Bengal appointed him to the post of Deputy Magis-

trate and Deputy Collector and the next day he joined his duties at Jessore. While in service Bankim took the B.L. examination in January, 1869 from the Presidency College, Calcutta and was placed third in the First Class. He was examined in the following subjects : Jurisprudence, Personal Rights and Status, The Law of Contracts, Rights of Property, Procedure and evidence, Criminal Law.

Bankim retired from Government service on the 14th of September, 1891. On the 13th of August 1891 he was elected Chairman of the literary section of the Society For Higher Training of Young Men. This society's name was subsequently changed into University Institute. Under the auspices of this society Bankim delivered two lectures in February and March 1894 on Vedic literature. These lectures were delivered in English and was published in the same year in the *Calcutta University Magazine*. These two articles are possibly the last of his literary works. In March, 1894 he had a severe attack of diabetes. After suffering intensely for about 23 days he fell unconscious on the 5th of April. Though he regained consciousness subsequently, he lost his speech and died on the 8th of April.

He married twice and had three daughters. His first marriage took place in 1849 ; his wife, however, died in 1859. He married again in June 1860. His second wife—Rajlaxmi Devi—died quite a few years after her husband's death.

Bankim's first publication came out on the 25th of February, 1852. It was published in *Sambad Prabhakar*. By 1853 he published a few poems in this journal as well as in another journal called *Sambad Sudharanjan*. His first prose compositions also appeared in *Sambad Prabhakar* in 1852. The poems were written in the style of Iswarchandra Gupta, the editor of *Sambad Prabhakar*, for whom Bankim retained firm admiration until the end of his life. These writings of Bankim are not only insipid but also puerile. They do not evince any promise of a future great writer. In 1856 Bankim published his first book : *Lalita ; Purakalik Galpa ; Tatha Manash*. Whatever we have said about his early writings is equally appli-

cable to this book also. However, a very significant change took place in Bankim's life at this time. He had been a student of Hooghly College. On the 12th of July, 1856 Bankim joined Presidency College, Calcutta, as a student of law. A provincial shifted to the metropolis. Though Hooghly is not far off from Calcutta, Bankim's exposure to the metropolitan air must have had a tremendous influence on him. Bankim busied himself with his studies. For another few years he prepared himself for his future calling. He lived in Calcutta for at least two years at this time.

This was the time when the atmosphere in Calcutta was surcharged with different cross-currents of ideas, social and economic changes—the future of Bengal, nay the future of the whole country was being mapped in Calcutta. Thanks to the introduction of English learning, India was exposed to the new ideas and knowledge acquired in the Western countries. Raja Rammohan Roy was the first Indian who symbolised the richness of the impact of the West on India. To many of his contemporary intellectuals Rammohan stood for a new liberty of the mind, a new clearness, purity and simplicity of knowledge and a new harmony of healthy and right living. He was the possessor of a newly discovered, untold wealth of wisdom which he tried to distribute abundantly. The negative aspect of Rammohan's mind may be described as a deeply felt aversion to everything unreasonable, insipid, merely ritualistic with which many aspects of Hinduism had over-burdened the world of thought in India. He found much of Hindu social and religious life stocked with practices, ceremonies, traditions and concepts from which the spirit seemed to have departed.

Rammohan was always seeking to outgrow the narrow confines of ritualistic religion and culture. As a matter of fact it can be doubted whether Rammohan believed in any religion at all. If belief in a personal God is a *sine qua non* of religion and if prayer is an invariable, necessary and unconditional concomitant of religion, then Rammohan, most certainly, was not a believer in religion. That he did not believe in a personal God is not disputed. Nowhere in the thirty-two songs that he wrote do we find the word

prayer or any one of its equivalents mentioned. However, even if he believed in religion, the religion in which he believed is something entirely different from what we generally understand by the word 'religion'. Though Rammohan had close contact with Unitarianism, he did not have full faith in its ideas. He was not the eternal liberal like Symmachus who argued against St Ambrose that since many roads lead to God, the old religion of Rome, under whose aegis Rome had prospered, be left alone in peace. His realism convinced him that Indian society was sick.

Rammohan diagnosed the ills of his countrymen in the larger context of universal culture. His work, at least a part of it, was carried forward by the Derozians and by Iswarchandra Vidyasagar. The last great man who belonged to the tradition of Rammohan was Rabindranath Tagore. Rammohan's endeavours and spirit were soon lost in the tidal wave of rising nationalism. When India was excited with nationalistic fervour in 1920-21—the leader of that fervid movement, Mahatma Gandhi, described Rammohan as "a pigmy compared to the unknown authors of the Upanishads". If modern India is characterized by the growth of the idea of political nationhood, decidedly Rammohan cannot be regarded as "the father of modern India". But if modern India wants to be at the vanguard of that universal culture which is gradually but surely emerging out of the collapse and bankruptcy of the concepts of colonialism and nationalism, then modern India must find its roots in the spirit of Raja Rammohan Roy. In modern India his was the first enunciation of the creed of education and perfectibility, of warm social feeling and faith in human nature, of peace and kindness and toleration emanating from a deep rational, aesthetic and moral sensibility. It is not for naught that Rabindranath Tagore wrote the following on the illustrious Rammohan :

Rammohan was the only person in his time, in the whole world of man, to realize completely the significance of the modern age. He knew that the ideal of human civilization does not lie in the isolation of independence, but in the brotherhood of interdependence of individuals as well as of nations in all spheres.

of thought and activity. His attempt was to establish our peoples on the full consciousness of their own cultural personality, to make them comprehend the reality of all that was unique and indestructible in their civilization and simultaneously to make them approach other civilizations. He devoted himself to the task of rescuing from the debris of India's decadence the truth of its civilization and to make our people build on them, as the basis, the superstructure of an international culture. Deeply versed in Sanskrit, he revived classical studies, and while he imbued the Bengali literature and language with the rich atmosphere of our classical period, he opened its doors wide to the spirit of the age, offering access to new words from other languages, and to new ideas. To every sphere of our national existence he brought the sagacity of a comprehensive vision, the spirit of self-manifestation of the unique in the light of the universal.

It is to be wondered what Rammohan would have written if he witnessed the new—or, is it revival?—idolatry which has almost hypnotised many of the intellectuals of India. With Rammohan, patriotism alone was not enough. He protested against the degradation of humanity anywhere in any form. This led him to protest against the passport system. He was one of the pioneers of the movement against the practice of *Satee*. He was the harbinger of true scientific spirit in India. Rammohan clearly distinguished between the non-scientific, traditional mode of thinking and the scientific approach towards problems and introduced a new tradition—the tradition of adopting a critical attitude towards the myths, the tradition of discussing them; the tradition of not only not telling a myth, but also of being challenged by the person to whom it is told. Rammohan fearlessly gave expression to his ideas and was ever ready to listen to what his listeners thought about them. Thus implicitly he admitted that his listeners might have better explanations than he had. This was an attitude with which the Indians were unacquainted for a long time. Rammohan ushered in a new way of asking

questions. He was a great admirer of Voltaire so much so that he prescribed Voltaire's *The Age of Louis XIV* as one of the texts to be read by the students of his school.

The comparatively small cities of India after the decline of the Mughal Empire were not conducive to the rise of lively intellectual discussions. The absence of a metropolitan culture militated against certainty of style, while the many small principalities wasted their energies in perpetuating the moribund old society and its mores. The newly founded city of Calcutta governed by an alien power, provided the opportunity to men like Rammohan to find out ways leading to a more fulfilling future. The cruel hands of death did not allow him to accomplish his mission even partially. Rammohan died at Bristol on the 27th of September 1832. But the seed of education which he sowed with the help of his friends bore different fruits. In matters of education Rammohan was lucky to get a friend in David Hare. If there is one foreigner to whom modern India should remain ever grateful, that man is David Hare.

II. DAVID HARE

Hare was born in Scotland on February 17, 1775. Around 1800 he came to Calcutta and started a watchmaker's business. On January 6, 1820 the following notification came out in *The Government Gazette* (Supplement) :

"David Hare
Watch Maker

Begs to inform his friends and the public that he has this day retired from Business ; and requests they will accept his most sincere thanks for the very liberal support with which they have favoured him for the last eighteen years. . . . January 1, 1820"

But why did Hare leave his business ? The answer to this can be found in the address which he delivered in reply to the request which 565 young 'native gentlemen' made to him. The request was to persuade Hare to sit for a portrait. Both the request of the young 'native gentlemen' and Hare's reply are worth quoting. They reveal

the respect and admiration that Hare earned from the people of India as well as a trait of his personality to which self-aggrandisement was unknown. David Hare chose to do good to others without any eagerness to be recognised. Here is the letter which the young 'native gentlemen' wrote :

"To

David Hare, Esq.

Dear sir,

Kindness, even when slightly evinced, excites a feeling of thankfulness in the minds of those who benefit by it. What, then, must be the sentiments which animate the many who have enjoyed happiness by receiving at your hands the best gift that it is possible for one thinking being to bestow upon another—education ? It has been the misfortune and reproach of many an age to permit its best benefactors to go to the grave without one token of its respect or gratitude for their endeavours. Warned by their example, it is our desire to avoid it, and to let it be known that, however, your eminent services to this country may be overlooked by others, they are appreciated by those who have experienced their advantages. We have, therefore, resolved upon soliciting the favour of your portrait, a request with which we earnestly hope you will have no objection to comply. Far be it from us to suppose that so slight a token of respect is adequate to the merit of your philanthropic exertions ; but it will be a gratification to our feelings if we are permitted to keep among us a representation of the man who has breathed a new life into Hindu society, who has made a foreign land the land of his adoption, who has voluntarily become the friend of a friendless people, and set an example to his own countrymen and ours, to admire which is fame, and to intimate immortality.

Waiting your kind compliance with the request contained in this address, and heartily wishing your

health and strength to pursue the career which you have so long maintained.

We have the pleasure to be, dear sir, your most obedient servants,

(Signed by Dukhinarunjan Mookerjee, and 564 other young native gentlemen.)

To this Hare replied :

Gentlemen : In answer to the address you have just presented to me, I beg to apologize for the feelings that overcome me ; and earnestly request to bear with me. A few years after my arrival in this country, I was enabled to discover during my intercourse with several native gentlemen, that nothing but education was requisite to render the Hindoos happy, and I exerted my humble abilities to further the interests of India ; and with the same sanction and support of the Government, and a few leading men of your community I endeavoured to promote the cause of education.

Gentlement : I have now the gratification to observe, that the tree of education has already taken root ; the blossoms I see around me ; and if it be left to grow up for ten years more, it will be impossible to eradicate it. To maintain and to continue the happy career already began, is entirely left to your own exertions. Your countrymen expect it from you, for they look upon you as their reformers and instructors. It remains for you to gain that object, and to show the inhabitants of other countries in what manner they may render themselves useful.

When I observe the multitude assembled to offer me this token of their regard, when I see that the most respectable and learned native gentlemen have flocked around me to present this address, it is most flattering to me, for it expresses the unfeigned sentiments of their hearts. I cannot contain myself, gentlemen. This is a proud day for me. I will preserve this token of your sentiments of gratitude to-

wards me unto my last breath. I will bequeath it to my posterity as a treasure which will inspire them with emulation to do good to their brethren.

Gentlemen: Were I to consult my private feelings, I should refrain from complying with your request. It has always been a rule with me never to bring myself into public notice, but to fill a private station in life. When I see however that the sons of the most worthy members of the Hindoo Community have come in a body to do me honour—when I observe that the address is signed by most of those with whom I am intimate, and whose feelings will be gratified if I sit for my portrait, I cannot but comply with your request.

17th February, 1831

(Signed D. Hare)

Even before Hare's coming to India there were several schools run by foreigners to teach English to the native population. But these schools mostly prepared students for becoming clerks or interpreters. Some of them only taught some English words corresponding to Bengali words and issued certificates to students mentioning the number of English words that he had picked up. Indological studies were already taken up by a section of the Western gentry. The Fort William College and the missionaries of Srirampur were active. The Asiatic Society was setting up its standards for Indological research. Hare could discern an eagerness on the part of a small section of the Indian gentry to learn knowledge acquired by the West and feel both the enthusiasm of the natives of India to come in contact with the knowledge acquired by the Western genius as well as the suspicion towards the institutions run by the foreigners. Possibly it is because of this that he preferred to remain in the background when the proposal for founding the Hindu College was mooted.

A chance accident brought Rammohan Roy and David Hare together and in no time they became intimate friends. Around 1814 Rammohan planned to start a Vedantic school to dispel the minds of the Hindus of superstitions. The two friends met. Rammohan was eager to strike at the

very root of Hindu superstitions. He wanted to make a frontal attack on it. Hare, however, could not support such a proposal. His approach was different. He was also an enemy of everything mean and narrow. But he thought that sounder systems of education rather than a frontal attack on the superstitious beliefs would prove to be the most efficacious. In no time Rammohan could see the truth in Hare's views.

A glimpse of the state of affairs in the field of education in the early 19th century can be had from what Lord Minto wrote in the year 1811 :

It is common remark that Science and literature are in a progressive state of decay among the Natives of India. From every inquiry which I have been enabled to make on this interesting subject, that remark appears to me but too well-founded. The number of the learned is not only diminished, but the circle of learning even amongst those who still devote themselves to it, appears to be considerably contracted. The abstract sciences are abandoned, polite literature neglected and no branch of learning cultivated but what is connected with the peculiar religious doctrines of the people. The immediate consequence of this state of things is the disuse and even actual loss of many books ; and it is to be apprehended that unless Government interpose with a fostering hand, the revival of letters may shortly become hopeless from want of books or of persons capable of explaining them.

Both Rammohan and Hare were eager to find a breakthrough in this impasse. The Hindu orthodox families of Calcutta as well as of other places, by this time, clearly saw what was written on the wall. If orthodoxy were to live, it had to get its sustenance from English learning. The doyen of the orthodoxy was a brilliant and rich man. He was Radhakanta Deb, son of Maharaja Nabakrishna Deb and adopted son of Raja Gopeemohan Deb. Radhakanta was born on the 10th of March, 1784 and died at Brindavana on the 19th of April, 1867.

Radhakanta Deb and his associates were also eager to cooperate with Hare's efforts to found a school. But they refused to have any association with the Hindu College if Rammohan had any association with it. For, "he (Rammohan) had chosen to separate himself from us (the orthodoxy) and to attack our religion." The orthodox group was ready to accept money and help from a Christian like David Hare; "but it is a different thing with Rammohan Roy who is a Hindu and has publicly reviled us and written against us and our religion." This antagonism to the anti-orthodoxy movement started by Rammohan was not confined to Calcutta only. A document preserved in the Madras Record Office (dated 2nd December, 1831) records the reactions of some people of Ganjam against Rammohan.

In the case of Rammohan Roy, how intelligent and many of talents he may be, yet from his late profession of belief in one God, in an irregular course, forsaking as a Brahmin, all religious rites, and ordinances of his caste, he is not accounted for among any regulated class of religion. He is neither a Christian, a Mohammadan, or a Hindu, but a free thinking man, abandoned by all religions and from this very reason the Hindoos cannot in any shape benefit from the exertions of his talents in their law courts, as Juror, or as any Description of Law Officer in his present situation...

Despite the poverty of language evinced in the petition, the Hindu orthodoxy had a very correct assessment of Rammohan's work and mission. The reaction of the Hindu orthodoxy against Rammohan's mission was more or less the same all over India. But Rammohan was no self-seeker. His mission was to introduce a new attitude towards life and that he could not hope to do without the introduction of learning and knowledge acquired in the Western countries. The orthodox Hindus were organising themselves against the movement pioneered by Rammohan. The first significant sign of their opposition came out in the open in matters relating to the foundation of the Hindu College. Rammohan stood aside and his friend,

though the main spirit behind the foundation of the Hindu College, refused to be officially and openly associated with the College. Rammohan opened his own school and Hare continued to guide the affairs of the Hindu College from behind and encouraged other institutions with missions similar to that of the Hindu College.

Hare's proposal for the founding of the Hindu College was presented before a meeting of prominent citizens of Calcutta by Dewan Baidyanath Mukherjee and it was eventually accepted. Neither Hare nor Rammohan was a revolutionary. A revolutionary situation is always complex. Usually it presents a pattern of ideology and practice which is difficult, if not impossible, to disentangle. In India there was hardly any rising self-confident class which was prevented from giving free expression to its political ambitions. Economic development was at its lowest ebb. Only in some isolated centres of India could one discern the slow rise of a small number of wealthy men not dependent upon land and that too under the aegis and control of Western mercantile capital. Only Calcutta could provide grounds for the activities of Hare and Rammohan, who wanted to carry the native population with them, and knew that their open participation in the movement for the establishment of the Hindu College would antagonize that section of the orthodoxy who were a bit suspicious of the Christian foreigners and of those who, like Rammohan, held views far more advanced than what could be appreciated by them. Already the orthodoxy was alarmed by the movement against the evil custom of burning the widows along with their dead husbands. The mendacity and cruelty of the custom were being exposed by some Englishmen and Rammohan. While Rammohan kept himself aloof from any direct involvement with the activities of the Hindu College, Hare, for a long time, did not take any direct part in the management of the College, though it was he who contributed much to it from the background. Hare was not interested in earning a name for himself. His concern was the spread of education in India.

Men like Radhakanta Deb associated with Hare's

endeavours as they found in him a selfless foreigner not only in words but also in deed. They, however, extended their hands of cooperation only after Rammohan withdrew from the affairs of the founding of the College. They could tolerate the foreigner; but not the renegade. The self-effacement of David Hare and of Rammohan led to the smooth establishment of the Hindu College in 1817; and Hare agreed to involve himself directly with the management of the College not before the end of 1824, i.e., after about seven years of the establishment of the College. But all these years neither Hare nor Rammohan took any respite from their feverish activities. Hare ran a school of his own at Simla—a locality of Calcutta—and Rammohan had his own school also. Both of them were the guiding spirits behind many other schools of that time.

On September 1, 1818 the Calcutta School Society was formed and Hare was selected to be a member of the Committee for the management of the Society. The Society's report of 1818-19 says, while reporting on the affairs of the school at Arpuli with which Hare was directly associated that:

They entertain little doubt but that his (Hare's) perseverance and interest with the natives will enable him to raise a school of considerable number. His object being to educate those only who would otherwise through poverty of their parents be entirely neglected, it is his intention to admit none as scholars who are now receiving instruction in the indigenous schools.

(It should be remembered here that the Hindu College mostly catered to the needs of the children of the gentry.)

Hare was appointed the Secretary of the indigenous Department of the Society in 1821 and its Secretary in 1823. A glimpse of the untiring zeal of Hare for the spread of education can be had from a piece published on June 18, 1830 in *India Gazette*:

From ten O'Clock in the morning (the time at which the classes in the schools started) to seven and sometimes to even eight in the evening, he visits.

all the native schools every day. Enquire for Mr. Hare during this time, and you are sure to find him in one or another school. But stop, Sir, this is but a part of what this worthy gentleman does for the good of the natives. If any one of the pupils be sick, Mr. Hare prescribes medicine, attends to him, and is not in ease until he is quite recovered. All this I speak from my own experience.

The same theme was reiterated in what was published in the June 28, 1830 issue of the same paper :

Mr. Hare has his time entirely at his disposal, and he devotes the whole of it, in the most efficient manner, to further the objects of all useful institutions established for the improvement of the natives, nay, more, he advances these objects by munificent donations from his private purse.

Round ten O'Clock in the morning Hare was often seen standing at the school gate with a towel in his hand and wiping out the perspiration from the faces of incoming children. He was sure that by coming in contact with knowledge acquired in the West the native population of India would enrich their own languages. It was with this purpose that he encouraged the development of the Bengali language and Bengali translation of Sanskrit and foreign books. In this regard, as in so many others, the two friends—Rammohan and Hare—had a clearer vision than many of their contemporaries.

The Calcutta School Society which was Hare's main field of activity fell into evil days. The Society used to get a paltry sum of Rs.500/- a year from the Government and the rest was donated by the rich people of the city. In 1833 the rich lost considerably in a disastrous fire in Calcutta. The Society's source for funds dried up. Hare had to close down the school at Arpuli and was constrained to limit his untiring zeal to running one school at Patal-danga—another locality in the city of Calcutta. Slowly the Calcutta School Society went into oblivion. But the movement started by Hare, Rammohan and their friends had taken deep roots by that time and there was no going

back from the path on which they set education of the Indian people.

In 1835 the Calcutta Medical College was established. Hare went forward to help it. Again the Hindu orthodoxy stood in the way. They said that their Dharma would be in jeopardy if their children were required to dissect dead bodies. In effect their movement was against the introduction of the system of medicine practised in the West. How could one aspire to be a physician—a modern physician—without dissecting dead bodies? Without dissection how could one make an empirical study of anatomy and physiology? This is how orthodoxy looked at Susruta and Charak. It seems that the orthodoxy either did not know the secrets of the ancient Hindu systems of medicine as it is being presented to-day by the post-independence nationalist scholars of India, or, they had a correct assessment of their own traditions.

Meanwhile, the petition of the orthodoxy against the Satee Regulation failed. But before their petition failed to elicit support from the Government, the orthodoxy formed into a committee and issued an appeal on the 6th of February, 1830. The Appeal, *inter alia*, reads :

Through the absence of all religious authority in this country, religion suffers great detriment. It has therefore become necessary that the excellent and the noble should unite and continually devise means for protecting our religion and our excellent customs, usages. It is, however, difficult to assemble all men together, for many do not invite to their houses or visit any beside those in their own circle, and there is no place of general resort. Though we are firmly united yet, because we do not meet together, we appear disunited, and hence those of an opposite faith are constantly seeking to destroy our religion. This led many of the respectable inhabitants of this city to assemble together on the 5th of Maugh of the present year and to establish a society called the *Dhurma Subha*...

According to the orders of the Right Hon. the Governor General, an appeal must be made to his majesty

the King of England relative to the regulations forbidding suttee.....

The following were the members of the Committee of the *Dhurma Subha* :

Baboo Ram Gopal Mullick
 „ Gopee Mohun Deb
 „ Radha Kant Deb
 „ Tarinichurn Mittre
 „ Ram Comul Sen
 „ Hurree Mohun Thakoor
 „ Kassenath Mullick
 „ Ashootosh Dey
 „ Gokoolnath Mullick
 „ Voisnodboss Mullick
 „ Nilmoney Dey

Muharaja Kalee Kissen Bahadur
 Treasurer Voisnodboss Mullick
 Secretary Bhowanichurn Banerjee.

Though the ostensible cause of the formation of the *Dhurma Subha* was the regulation against *Satee*, the deeper cause lies in the feeling of insecurity of the orthodoxy in the face of the rising wave of rationalism and criticism. The orthodoxy could feel confident in the face of Ram-mohan's opposition. But the Derozeans shook them to their core. They realised that without consolidating their forces they could no longer resist incursions into their orthodox beliefs and practices.

III. DEROZIO

Henry Louis Vivian Derozio was born in Calcutta on the 18th of April, 1809. His father Francis Derozio is described in St. John's Baptismal Register (1789) 'as a Native Protestant' and in the Bengal Directory of 1795 as a 'Portugese Merchant and Agent' in Calcutta. Derozio attended a school run by David Drummond, a Scotsman. Drummond was known as a metaphysician and as a poet among the Calcutta gentry. It was under Drummond that Derozio received all his education from the age of six. He was appointed as the fourth teacher at the Hindu

College in May, 1826. He was an exceptionally gifted teacher. After reading Derozio's *Objections to the Philosophy of Emmanuel Kant* Rev. Dr W. H. Mill told a large audience that Derozio's ideas "were perfectly original and displayed powers of reasoning and observation which would not disgrace even gifted philosophers." His career as a teacher was marked with great success. Soon he started an association called the *Academic Association*. It had a monthly organ called *Athenium* and was edited by Derozio's student, Madhav Chandra Mallick. In meeting after meeting Derozio and his students discussed social, religious, economic and other problems. Derozio impressed upon his students the idea that in the field of knowledge they should accept no other authority than their own reason. His students became free thinkers. In the glare of the new light brought to them by Derozio they saw everything in a new perspective. Their enthusiasm knew no bound. They enjoyed a new freedom—a freedom unknown to the previous generation. They laughed at the barren and old traditions, refused to confine social and religious activities to mere rituals, demanded education for women and challenged the taboos on drinking and beef-eating, etc. This was too much for the orthodoxy. Rammohan was all right. He was a grown-up man. But Derozio was corrupting the children of orthodoxy. After all who were the students of the Hindu College? Most of them came from the upper caste families. They were destined to be the leaders of the society. Derozio was asking them to shake the very foundation of the Hindu society. How will the boys taught by Derozio accept the dictates of the *Dharma Sastras*? The orthodoxy acted quickly and brought against Derozio the charge of corrupting the youth. In a letter to Dr H. H. Wilson, Visitor of the College, Derozio wrote :

... No is my distinct reply to these infamous fabrications.... I am neither afraid nor ashamed to confess having stated the doubts of philosophers upon the existence of a God, because I have also stated the solution of those doubts... That I should be called a sceptic and an infidel is not surprising as

these names are always given to persons who dare think for themselves in religion, but I assure you that the imputations which you say are alleged against me I have learnt for the first time from your letter, not having even dreamed that sentiments so opposed to my own could have been ascribed to me. I must trust therefore to your generosity to give the most unqualified contradiction to these ridiculous stories. I am not a greater monster than most people, though I certainly should not know myself were I to credit all that is said of me.

The voice of sanity cried in vain. At the instance of Ram Comul Sen, whose name we have already seen in the list of the Committee members of the *Dharma Subha*, the Hindu College compelled Derozio to resign from its services on the 25th of April 1831. Derozio, however, continued to meet his students in his home. We are told by Feari Chand Mitra, himself a devoted student of Derozio, that Derozio's students

regularly visited him at his house and spent hours in conversation with him. He continued to teach at home what he had taught at School. He used to impress upon his pupils the sacred duty of thinking for themselves; and to live and die for truth; to cultivate and practise all the virtues, shunning vice in every shape. He often read examples from ancient history of the love of justice, patriotism, philanthropy and self-abnegation, and the way in which he set forth the points stirred up the minds of his pupils. Some were impressed with the excellence of justice, some with the paramount importance of truth, some with patriotism, some with philanthropy....

But the great teacher was overtaken by death soon. He died of cholera on the 23rd of December, 1831. His tomb can be seen in the Park Street Cemetery, Calcutta. The great teacher and a promising poet wrote his own epitaph: *The Poet's Grave* :

There all in silence, let him sleep his sleep
No dream shall flit into that slumber deep

No wandering mortal thither once shall wend,
There nothing over him but the heavens shall weep
There never pilgrim at his shrine shall bend,
But only stars alone their nightly vigils keep.

Derozio was mistaken. His grateful students did bend before his shrine. But they soon failed to carry forward his message of dauntless intellectual adventure, though their contribution towards the formation of modern India can hardly be over-rated. Who can forget Derozians like Krishna Mohan Banerjee, Ramgopal Ghosh, Hara Chunder Ghosh, Dukkhiranarjan Mukherji, Degumber Mitter, Peari Chand Mitra, Ramtonoo Lahiri and many others who were directly influenced by the great teacher? Thanks to the efforts of Rammohan, Hare and Derozio an atmosphere was created where rational discernment received a high place. And it is because of this atmosphere that the Calcutta Medical College did not find it very difficult to get Indian students on its rolls despite the opposition of the orthodoxy.

IV DAVID HARE'S GREATNESS

There was hardly any good institution or movement in India with which Rammohan and Hare were not associated. However, the area of Rammohan's activity was far wider than that of Hare. Rammohan was a crusader against evil and he did not remain content by fighting against evil only; he worked hard for the promotion of the good also. He advocated, among other things, abolition of Koolinism, caste system, eternal widowhood of the Hindu widows and fought for the rights of the women. But Hare kept himself confined to education only, though we find him occasionally associated with other movements also. Thus he was at the back of getting the law against the ill-treatment to labourers indented for work in Mauritius and Bourbons passed. He was also the guiding spirit behind the *Society for the Acquisition of General Knowledge*—the first society of Indians where politics was discussed openly. The society was established on March 12, 1828.

Though Hare endeavoured to remain anonymous yet his work could not remain hidden from the grateful people of India.

In 1830 some people thought of making arrangements for the preservation of the memories of great educationists. In all this David Hare's name was not mentioned. There were proposals for preserving the memories of Edward Hyde East and H. H. Wilson. Doubtless, both of them were great educationists. But it may be recalled here that both, especially H. H. Wilson, supported the proposal to ask Derozio to resign from the services of the Hindu College. The English orientalists, (Edward Hyde East and H. H. Wilson were, most definitely, among them), scarcely supported full-fledged introduction of knowledge acquired in the Western countries to India. Hare was no orientalist.

However, the admirers of Hare knew the worth of his work. Hence a meeting was held on February 17, 1831. We have already quoted the address presented to Hare in this meeting. How truly Hare described his feelings when he said: "It has always been a rule with me never to bring myself into public notice, but to fill a private station in life." And what a glorious fulfilment of "a private station in life" did he achieve! He gave to India all the yearnings of his soul—education.

Hare was appointed the Secretary of the Medical College in Calcutta in 1837. Within a month of his appointment he moved for the establishment of a Hospital to give training to medical students. On April 1, 1838 he succeeded in starting a twenty-bed hospital attached to the College. Hare left the Secretaryship of the College in 1841. By this time he had spent all his savings for the spread of education in India. As Secretary of the Medical College he used to get R. 400/- per month. But from this amount he had to pay for the establishment of his office. As a result when he retired he had practically nothing to fall back upon. Meanwhile he was overburdened with more and more work. In 1840 the Government appointed him as a Commissioner in the Court of Requests. This appointment infuriated the *Friend of India*. It is worth

its while to quote the comments of the *Friend of India* published in its March 19, 1840 issue:

We regret to hear that Lord Auckland has been advised to confer the situation of Commissioner in the Court of Requests on Mr. David Hare; and that for two reasons; first, because it will take him out of the sphere for which he was eminently adopted, and in which he was doing much good. His particular forte is the education of the young; and, his long continued exertions in this great cause have given him an aptitude for the work, and the Natives a degree of confidence in him, which ought to have prevented his quitting it. Secondly, he is now placed in a situation for which neither his previous occupations, nor his habits of thought have at all prepared him. Without any training in judicial investigation, he will find his new position on the bench both awkward and irksome....

Our respect for Mr. Hare's character is so universally known that our motives in offering these remarks will not be mistaken either by him or his friends. He has laid the country under a debt of gratitude by his labours in the cause of education, which even the salary of a Commissioner does not repay. Any remuneration by which Government might have thought fit to mark its sense of the services would have received our approbation; only we should have asked it to be bestowed with judgement and discretion, in that department in which his exertions have hitherto run. By the present appointment, the cause of education has lost much, while the cause of justice has gained nothing.

One can understand why the Government took him out of the field of education. Possibly Hare was doing too much. Possibly the rulers got scared at the spectre of that proudest day in the annals of the British people, so very eloquently talked about by Macaulay, when because of the dissemination of knowledge acquired in the West, the Indian people would be able to say to their British rulers that they could quit. It is likely the Government

was scared of Hare's activities. Financially Hare was in a tight corner. That was the opportune time when he could be removed from his intimate concern.

But Hare was not the man to remain content by standing aloof from his life's mission. He continued to take keen interest in his students. On May 31, 1842 he was stricken with cholera at 1 O'Clock in the morning. On the previous day he went to nurse someone who was down with the same disease. His students rushed to his succour. So long as he was conscious he insisted that no one but the doctor should stay in his room. He was afraid that one of his students might get the contamination of the deadly disease. The humble man was in his death bed and he died just before sunset on June 1. Next morning all his grateful admirers, students and friends carried his body to the Hindu College where his body was put to rest. Incidentally, the land on which the Hindu College stood belonged to Hare and he transferred it to the College at a nominal price. Hare was neither a profound scholar nor a great man. He was an ordinary man. Yet he was something more than great. Whatever he did, he did at the dictates of his heart; and his mind pursued whatever his heart dictated. Hare is an enigma. When we read about him we feel that we are in touch with a sense of greatness and piety which knows no national or religious boundaries. It is because of this essential and universal greatness, piety and humanism that Hare could not only help in the preparation of the ground for a new way of thinking in Bengal but also sowed the seed for it.

V CONTRIBUTION OF RAMMOHAN

While discussing the contributions of Rammohan we had to digress into the life and work of Hare and others. If we want to understand the life and time of Rammohan, we cannot avoid men like David Hare, Derozio, Radhakanta Deb, and many others. There was hardly any problem faced by man during Rammohan's life to which he did not address himself. The first few decades of the nineteenth century constitute one of the most fascinating periods of Indian history and one can safely say that if there is

one man who symbolises the period in its valuational aspect, that man is Rammohan.

The Indian orthodoxy continued in its age-old superstitions against the foreigners. They were afraid that if the Englishmen settled in India, their *Dharma* would be in jeopardy. Lord Bentinck saw great possibilities in the intimate contact between the Englishmen and the Indians. In his *Minutes on Colonisation* (May 30, 1829) he wrote in favour of colonisation. While countering the arguments against colonisation he pointed out :

But, it may be said that the danger lies in the union of the British settlers with the natives of the country ; and this is a more intelligible ground of argument. It assumes, however, a vast change to have occurred in the frame of society, such as can scarcely be looked for in centuries to come ; I might also say a vast improvement which would imply that the time had arrived when it would be wise for England to leave India to govern itself. For assuredly, if we suppose the distinctions of tribe and caste to have ceased, and conceive these rich and extensive regions to be filled with an united people, capable of appreciating and asserting political freedom, we must complete the picture of imagining that England has (voluntarily or involuntarily) ceased to withhold privileges she has taught them to exercise.

The controversy between the pro-colonization and the anti-colonization groups, both among the Indian and the Englishmen, is a controversy between two concepts of modernisation. It would be wrong to think that Radhakanta Deb and his group who opposed Rammohan were against the introduction of knowledge acquired in the West to India. They, as a matter of fact, fully cooperated with the founding of the Hindu College. They wanted modernisation within the ambit of the *Dharma Sastras*. The Hindu religion must not be disturbed by the introduction of that kind of knowledge for which Rammohan stood or the class of attitudes extolled by Derozio. Hence only that kind of knowledge which is useful in a mundane way should be imported from the West. Any disturbance to the Hindu

attitude towards life must be resisted. Here is an excerpt from Radhakanta's opinion on education which he submitted to the Bengal Government in response to Lord Stanley's proposals of 1859 :

As soon as the people will begin to reap the fruits of a solid vernacular education, agricultural and industrial schools may be established in order to qualify the enlightened masses to become useful members of Society. Nothing should be guarded against more carefully than the insensible introduction of a system whereby, with a smattering knowledge of English, youths are weaned from the plough, the axe and the loom, to render them ambitious only for the clerkships for which hosts would besiege the Government and Mercantile offices, and the majority being disappointed (as they must be), would (with their little knowledge inspiring pride) be unable to return to their trade, and would necessarily turn vagabonds.

Radhakanta Deb is advocating the establishment of only Industrial and Agricultural Schools where students are to go after receiving a solid vernacular education. Humanities, as developed in the West, are not mentioned at all. English will be needed only for teaching certain useful crafts like agriculture, engineering, etc. And this education is to be given only to those who have already received a solid education in the vernacular. The students with "a solid vernacular education" will be less prone to be influenced by English learning. Even there, he is not to learn the things which will not help him to become a useful and conformist member of the society.

In contradistinction to Radhakanta Deb, Rammohan supported the move in favour of colonisation. In a meeting held at the Town Hall, Calcutta on the 17th of December, 1829 he and his friend, Dwarkanath Tagore, the grandfather of the great poet, Rabindranath Tagore, spoke in favour of the following resolution which was subsequently passed by the meeting :

That this meeting considering one of the main legal obstructions to the Commercial, agricultural and

manufacturing improvements to consist in the obstacles which are opposed to the occupancy or acquisition of land by British subjects, and against their free resort to and unmolested residence within the limits of the Company's Administration, does approve and confirm the concluding prayer of the former Petitions to Parliament for the 'abolition of all such restrictions on the resort of British subjects to, and on their residence in India, as are calculated to affect the Commercial prosperity of the country.

While supporting the resolution Rammohan said :

...From personal experience I am impressed with the conviction that the greater our intercourse with European gentlemen, the greater will be our improvement in literacy, social and political affairs, a fact which can be easily proved by comparing the condition of those of my countrymen who have enjoyed this advantage, with that of those who unfortunately have not had that opportunity and a fact which I could, to the best of my belief, declare on solemn oath before any assembly As to the Indigo planters I beg to observe that I have travelled through several districts in Bengal and Behar and I found the natives residing in the neighbourhood of indigo plantations evidently better clothed and better conditioned than those who lived at a distance from such stations. There may be some partial injury done by the Indigo planters, but, on the whole, they have performed more good to the generality of the natives of this country, than any other class of Europeans, whether in or out of the Service.¹

1 While I was in the University of Western Australia in the year 1974 Dr R. N. Ghose and Mr N. S. Narayanan of the Department of Economics very kindly showed me the manuscript of their paper on John Wheatley. This note owes much to the manuscript. Wheatley came to India in 1822. Wheatley was a British economist. He was a prolific writer and in those days of pamphleteering, he often published monographs in the form of open letters. Two such letters—*A Letter to the Right Honourable Charles Watkin Williams Wynn, President of the Board of Control on the Latent Resources of India* and *A Letter to His grace the Duke of Devonshire on the State of Ireland, and on the General Effects of Coloni-*

Rammohan had to refer to the Indigo planters as the orthodoxy was playing too much on the rumour of their depredations. He held that the advent of the English people in India was a blessing to the Indians. India needed the help of the West to rouse her from the stupor in which she had been lulling herself for ages. To Rammohan freedom without progress was meaningless. Progress, in its turn, entails justice. To him freedom was an indivisible entity. He stood for the freedom of the press ; he stood for the freedom of trade ; he stood for freedom in all aspects of life. But he could not brook the idea of cruel monopoly in the name of freedom. Freedom does not imply a cut-throat competition among freebooters. Rammohan believed that the atrocities of monopoly could be mellowed by the enactment of welfare laws based on justice.

The economic historians of India would do us an immense service if they can unravel the Indigo planters controversy. Rammohan held that because of them there was some prosperity among the people who were connected with them. They were not as rapacious as Father Long, Dinabandhu Mitra and others later thought them to be. Nationalist economic historians have taken Father Long as the last word on the Indigo planters. But a careful use of Father Long's book will show that after all he was not a very acute and objective observer. It should be mentioned here that Rammohan never thought that the condition of the cultivators of his time was good. But for this he held something else responsible and not the planters. In his evidence before the East India Committee, Rammohan stated :

zation were published in 1823 and 1824 respectively from Calcutta. In these two monographs Wheatley went beyond what James Mill suggested in his article in the *Edinburgh Review* of April, 1810. Mill wrote: "Instead of sending out a Governor-General to be recalled in a few years, why should we not constitute one of our Royal Family, Emperor of Hindustan, with hereditary succession? The Sovereign would then be surrounded by Britons, and the spirit of Britons would animate and direct his government: Europeans of all descriptions would be invited to settle in his country and identify their interests with those of the nation."

It is to be wondered as to whether Rammohan read Wheatley's letter.

Under both the systems (*Zamindari* and *Ryotwari*) the condition of the cultivators is very miserable; in the one they are placed at the mercy of the zemindars' avarice and ambition; in the other, they are subjected to the extortions and intrigues of the surveyors and of the Government revenue officers.

As a means of protecting the interests of the poor peasantry he suggested that the revenue officers should not have any magisterial powers, a power which was given under Lord Cornwallis' plan. He further suggested that investigations of charges against revenue officers should be undertaken by the judicial courts, and that such investigations should be completed in the shortest possible time.

It seems that Rammohan had firm faith in the efficacy of the interest and pressure groups—things which are essential for the development and preservation of freedom and democracy. We find his name associated with all kinds of interest and pressure groups. As an example we may cite the formation of the *Commercial and Patriotic Association* in Calcutta on the 31st of January, 1828. The scheme of the Association emanated from Rammohan and one of the objectives of the Association was to engage itself "through the medium of proper instruments employed by them for that purpose in the wide field of agriculture, trade, and general commerce, in order to promote substantial interests of the under-taking." The articles of the Association further stated :

That, should ultimate success attend their united operations for one common object, under the divine blessing, the Association shall hold it to be a sacred and interesting part of their duty to watch over and promote, by every legitimate means in their power, the real welfare, and interests of the East Indian branch of the rising generation around them, including all such youths of European descent as may be destined to be born, to live, and to die in this country.

It also stated that :

....The Association shall, in the case above contemplated, equally hold it to be their highest duty to

promote the work of sound and wholesome education among the native population, and to introduce a spirit of general improvement into all the available resources of the country around them, on such a scale as circumstances touching their financial prosperity may warrant.

The Association was a joint stock company where a person had to pay a sum of Sicca Rupees one thousand in order to be a member. Rammohan together with Messrs. W. DaCosta, J. Fountain, A. Imlach, R. Kerr, J. W. Ricketts and S. P. Singer were the members of the Committee of management. Rammohan was also one of the Joint Treasurers of the Association. The Association did yeoman's service to the Indians. It stood as a standing testimony to Rammohan's conviction that for the achievement of great things co-operation between peoples of different nationalities is a necessity.

Rammohan was profoundly influenced by Bentham; but he did not share Bentham's conviction that people of different countries could be governed by only one system of law. In his essay on *Rights of Hindoos over Ancestral Property* he writes:

In every country, rules determining the rights of succession to and alienation of property first originated in the conventional choice of the people, or in the discretion of the highest authority, secular or spiritual, and those rules have been subsequently established by the common usage of the country, and confirmed by judicial proceedings.

It would be incorrect to think that Rammohan stood for everything bequeathed by tradition. In his *A Paper on Revenue System of India* he tells us:

But I am satisfied that an unjust precedent and practice, even of longer standing, cannot be considered as the standard of justice by an enlightened government.

Tradition must pass the test of being reasonable and moral. Only then it is good. In another place Rammohan writes:

If mankind are brought into existence, and by nature formed to enjoy the comforts of society and the pleasure of an improved mind, they must be justified in opposing any system, religious, domestic or political, which are inimical to the happiness of society or calculated to debate the human intellect.¹

Rammohan was sure that in India certain things happened which were "inimical to the happiness of society or calculated to debase the human intellect." He welcomed the British in India

...for having unexpectedly delivered this country, from the long continued tyranny of its former rulers and place it under the Government of the English, a nation who not only are blessed with the enjoyment of civil and political liberty, but also interests themselves in promoting liberty and social happiness as well as free enquiry into liberty, and religious subjects, among those nations to which that influence extends....²

To Rammohan the most effective instrument for social change was education. Social change cannot be thought of in isolation from the change of attitude of the individuals who constitute the society. How can the attitude of individuals be changed? Rammohan's answer to this problem is, education, social reform and economic development. But the question is: what kind of education? The kind of education that one chooses depends on one's ideas regarding the aims of education.

It is true that the Indians at no period of their history have been wholly illiterate. There were innumerable schools in the countless villages of the country. These schools used to give instruction in the rudiments of reading, writing and arithmetic. They equipped the boys to eke out a livelihood for themselves and their families. But such education was not calculated to enlighten the minds of students or to improve their moral feelings. The big centres of higher learning disintegrated long before

¹ Quoted by Bimanbehari Majumdar. *History of Political Thought*, p. 18.

² Cf. *Final Appeal to the Christian Public*.

the British came to India. Small institutions run by individuals used to give advanced courses in Sanskrit, Persian and Arabic. Here, again, the instructors were mostly divided in terms of religion. The Hindu, Brahmin Pundit used to teach Sanskrit; and Arabic and Persian were taught, mainly, by the Maulovis. The instructions given in these schools were confined to traditional subjects, like Philosophy, Literature, Grammar, etc., and were taught in the traditional mode on the basis of texts written long ago. Rammohan was the first Indian to realise that India must change the system and content of her education. But even before Rammohan, the authorities of the East India Company, for various reasons, realised that it had a responsibility to give enlightened education to its subjects. Possibly it is with this intention that Warren Hastings established the Calcutta Madrassah in 1781. It is said that the original intention behind the establishment of the Madrassah was to encourage the study of Arabic, Persian and Mohamedan law. The East India Company wanted native officers in the courts of justice. For Hindu law, the Brahmin Pundits were being trained in the *Toles* (native Sanskrit institutions). But the Muslims had hardly any institution corresponding to the Hindu *Toles*. And soon the Company felt that it would be unwise not to start a similar institution for Sanskrit. The Benares Sanskrit College was established in 1792 by Jonathan Duncan, the Resident at Benares, "as a means of employing, beneficially for the country, some part of a surplus which the public revenues yielded over their estimated amount. The object of the institution was the preservation and cultivation of the laws, literature and the religion of the Hindoos (and more particularly of their laws) in their sacred city, a measure which it was conceived would be equally advantageous to the natives....". These efforts for the cultivation of oriental learning were primarily meant to train the natives of India to help the British judges in the judicial administration.

Administrative and commercial compulsions forced the East India Company to educate some of their officers in oriental languages and literature. But this attracted some

genuine scholars. They maintained that when they had to learn oriental languages and literature, it would be good to learn these well. This group was headed by Sir William Jones and encouraged by no less a man than Warren Hastings. Because of their efforts the Asiatic Society of Bengal was founded on the 15th of January 1784 with William Jones as its first President and Hastings as the patron. Meanwhile the East India Company was feeling the need for its officers to be trained in oriental languages and literature in India itself. With this purpose the Fort William College was founded in Calcutta in May 1800. Some Indians were recruited to teach oriental languages and literature to the East India Company officers. The College also succeeded in inducting the services of William Carey, a Baptist Missionary. The Baptist Mission at Serampore, near Calcutta, was established by Carey, Ward and Marshman in 1800. Because of these institutions oriental learning received a new direction and a new life. Even so, education remained in a deplorable state. The Government was interested in encouraging oriental learning alone. In the midst of this all-pervading darkness in the field of education, the only isolated little lamps were kept burning by some Christian missionaries and individuals. Rammohan not only helped these efforts but also did something on his own to extend and develop educational facilities in the country. But the controversy between the orientalists and the non-orientalists continued unabated. Rammohan took active part in this controversy. Following Lord Minto's Minute on Native Education dated March 6, 1811, the Governor-General in Council decided on the 21st of August 1821 to establish in Calcutta an institution similar to that of Benares. Rammohan protested against the establishment of the Calcutta Sanskrit College. In a letter addressed to the Governor-General on December 11, 1823 he laid bare his ideas. This letter is one of the most important landmarks in the history of education in India. It reflects significant aspects of Rammohan's personality and outlook.¹

1 See Appendix 1.

Rammohan was a firm believer in human liberty. Human liberty is founded on a system of free education ; and there cannot be any free education without a free mind. A free mind is founded on reason. He wanted his people to stand on their rationality. This was his life's mission. Though he appealed again and again to the Government for help in his mission, he did not sit idle when that help did not come. His educational endeavours have already been mentioned and we have also mentioned the formation of the Commercial and Patriotic Association, Calcutta.

Doubtless, before Rammohan's efforts the Serampore missionaries and the pundits of the Fort William College, Calcutta, did pioneering work for the improvement of Bengali prose ; but their compositions were chiefly meant for the young officers of the East India Company and their missionaries. What Kashiprasad Ghose wrote in the *Calcutta Literary Gazette*, subsequently quoted by the *India Gazette* of January 27, 1830, truly describes Rammohan's contribution to Bengali language and literature. Commenting on a translation into Bengali of some portions of Mill's *History of British India* Ghose wrote : "This work has been well managed in its style and idiom, and is deserving of the first rank of prosaic works among the literature of the Bengalees." However, Rammohan's contribution to Bengali language and literature was clearly brought out in an article by Kishorychand Mitra published in the *Calcutta Review* (December, 1845). *Inter alia*, Mitra stated that Rammohan

undertook to create a literature in Bengali, and his exertions were crowned with a success that exceeded the most sanguine expectation. The Bengali has been so vastly improved by his careful cultivation, by his taste and genius, that it can be now successfully devoted to the communication of western knowledge to the children of this great country. He was evidently the first who consecrated, so to speak, the Bengali language by rendering it the medium of moral and religious instruction ... To his exertions ... we are largely indebted for the improve-

ment of the Bengali language. He was evidently one of the best, if not the best Bengali writer ever born.

To Rammohan a free press was an absolute necessity for the dissemination of ideas. Rammohan hailed Lord Moira's boldness when he relaxed the restriction on free discussion in the press by passing a Regulation in 1818. But his enthusiasm was only short-lived. Rammohan breathed the free air and plunged himself into journalistic activities. In 1823 when Lord Moira left India, the reigns of the Government were held by Adam, the senior member of the Governor's council, till the arrival of the next Governor-General. Adam was quick in muzzling the free press. He was particularly worried about the activities of James Silk Buckingham of the *Calcutta Journal*—a liberal paper started in October, 1818. Rammohan was not sitting idle. He was at the back of several papers like *The Bengal Gazette*, *Samachar Durpun*, *Friend of India*, *Sambad Cowmoody*, etc. Rammohan himself edited a Persian weekly *Mirat-ul-Ukhbar* for catering to the needs of those who did not know English or Bengali. Adam was particularly sore with Buckingham. When he acted in place of Lord Moira he took the first opportunity to deport Buckingham. After that on the 14th of March 1823 he passed stringent regulations curtailing the freedom of the press. For the first time he introduced the odious licensing system. But the Regulation of Adam had to have the approval of the Supreme Court of Calcutta before it could have the force of law. Rammohan and his friends reached sharply. Chunder Coomar Tagore, Dwaraka Nath Tagore, Rammohan Roy, Hurchunder Ghose, Gowree Churn Bonnergee and Prosunno Coomar Tagore appealed to the Supreme Court for justice and fair play. The memorial which they submitted is a classic in the history of the struggle for the freedom of the press.¹

Rammohan and his group submitted another memorial on the same subject to the King of England. This memorial elaborates the arguments contained in the memorial

¹ See Appendix 2.

to the Acting Judge of the Supreme Court of Judicature at Fort William in Bengal. Rammohan's efforts failed. Lord Amherst who succeeded Adam did not oppose Adam's Regulations. On the 4th April 1823 the last issue of Rammohan's *Mirat-ool-Ukhbar* came out wherein he wrote :

It was previously intimated, that a Rule and Ordinance was promulgated by His Excellency the Honourable the Governor-General in Council, enacting, that a Daily, Weekly, or any Periodical Paper should not be published in this City, without an Affidavit being made by its Proprietor in the Police Office, and without a License being procured for such publication from the Chief Secretary to Government; and that after License being obtained, it is optional with the Governor-General to recall the same, whenever His Excellency may be dissatisfied with any part of the Paper. Be it known, Macnaghten, Judge of the Supreme Court, expressed his approbation of the Rule and Ordinance so passed. Under these circumstances, I, the least of all the human race, in consideration of several difficulties, have, with much regret and reluctance, relinquished the publication of this Paper (*Mirat-ool-Ukhbar*). These difficulties are these :

First—Although it is very easy for those European Gentlemen, who have the honour to be acquainted with the Chief Secretary to Government, to obtain a License according to the prescribed form; yet to a humble individual like myself, it is very hard to make his way through the porters and attendants of a great Personage; or to enter the doors of the Police Court, crowded with people of all classes, for the purpose of obtaining what is in fact, already in my own option. As it is written :

Abrooe kih bu-sud khoon i jigar dust dihud

Buomed-i kurum-e, kha'juh, bu-durban mu-furosh.

The respect which is purchased with a hundred drops of heart's blood

Do not though, in the hope of a favour, commit to the mercy of a power.

Secondly—To make Affidavit voluntarily in an open Court, in presence of respectable Magistrates, is looked upon as very mean and censurable by those who watch the conduct of their neighbours. Besides the publication of a Newspaper is not incumbent upon every person, so that he must resort to the evasion of establishing fictitious Proprietors, which is contrary to Law, and repugnant to Conscience.

Thirdly—After incurring the disrespect of solicitation and suffering the dishonour of making Affidavit, the constant apprehension of the License being recalled by Government which would disgrace the person in the eyes of the world, must create such anxiety as entirely to destroy his peace of mind. Because a man by nature liable to err, in telling the real truth cannot help sometimes making use of words and selecting phrases that might be unpleasant to Government. I however, here prefer silence to Speaking out :

*Guda-e goshuh nusheenee to khafiza mukhurosh
Roo mooz muslubut-i khash khoos-rowan danund.*

Thou, O Hafiz, art a poor retired man ; be silent :

Princes know the secrets of their own Policy.

I now entreat those kind and liberal gentlemen of Persia and Hindoostan, who have honoured the *Mirat-Ool-Ukhbar* with their patronage, that in consideration of the reasons above stated, they will excuse the nonfulfilment of my promise to make them acquainted with passing events, as stated in the introductory remarks in the first Number ; and I earnestly hope from their liberality, that wherever and however I may be situated, they will always consider me, the humblest of the human race, as devoted to their service.¹

It has been truly said by Lt. A. White in his book *Consideration on the State of British India* that “the ex-

¹ Cf. J. K. Majumdar, *Raja Rammohan Roy And Progressive Movements in India*, Calcutta, 1941, pp. 322-323.

ample of Rammohan, and of one or two individuals, may be cited as instances of individuals who have attained some notions of civil liberty; but he, (Rammohan) like Bacon and Galileo, has outstripped the genius of his age." Rammohan had an intense awareness of the realities of life around him. Possibly he is the only person, coming from a Hindu family, who took Islam and Christianity seriously and had an incomparable understanding and scholarship, especially of these two religions, in addition to his own tradition. None of his successors could carry forward the mission of Rammohan. Different individuals picked up different threads from his personality. Rammohan exhibited rational consideration on a magnificent scale. He illustrates the tone of mind that alone can maintain a free society and expressed the reasons justifying that tone. To him political action was not the only means of social change. In addition to political action he advocated the deliberate formation of institutions, embodying purposes of special groups, relatively unconnected with the general purposes of any political state, or any embodiment of tribal unity playing the part of a state.

Rammohan is an incomparable man. He abandoned the old dogmas, exalted the beneficial order of the universe, the progressive education of the human race, and the moral perfection of the individual. He participated in the endeavours to usher in a free humanity, one which transcends all ethnic, religious and national differentiations and leads to the attainment of a better future, a more serene faith in a greater enjoyment of life. Bentham truly addressed him as "Intensely Admired and Dearly Beloved Collaborator in the Service of Mankind!"¹ Rammohan blended desperation with hope and affirmation of life with the scepticism of wisdom and thus he faced the political, religious and social orthodoxy of his own time and place with courage and ethical determination. A number of his successors, especially those belonging to the *Brahmo Samaj* valued him as a sort of mystic, a religious seer. But there were others who were motivated

1 See Appendix 3.

by an intense concern for human beings and for their uplift not through religious movement but through the propagation of rational education. The doyen of this group was Iswar Chandar Vidyasagar.

VI ISHWAR CHANDRA VIDYASAGAR

While paying his homage to the memory of Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, Rabindranath Tagore remarked that what bewildered him was not the fact that Vidyasagar was great, but the question how a total man like Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar could be born in a hapless country like India. Neither Rammohan's nor Vidyasagar's nor for that matter of any great man's character can be explained by the facile formulas of Marxian determinism or any other form of historical determinism. There are men who shape history more than they are themselves shaped by history.

Iswar Chandra Bandopadhyaya was born on September 26, 1820 in an obscure village, Birsingha, in the District of Midnapore in West Bengal. His grandfather was a Sanskrit Pandit and his father—Thakurdas Bandopadhyaya had some grounding in Sanskrit as well as in English. Thakurdas had to give up his studies in order to earn his and his family's livelihood and go to Calcutta for this purpose at the early age of 14 or 15. At 23 or 24 he married Bhagabati Devi and the couple had several children of whom Iswar Chandra was the eldest.

Iswar Chandra lived almost his whole life in Calcutta. When he came to Calcutta as a little boy to study, the city was passing through an intellectual ferment initiated by Rammohan, Derozio and their associates. These passionate and dauntless soldiers of forlorn hope, with imperishable excellence of sincerity and strength, were waging a fiery battle against the old impossible world. Iswar Chandra joined the Calcutta Sanskrit College in June 1829. Sometimes in 1839 he passed an examination which entitled him to use the word 'Vidyasagar' after his name. 'Vidyasagar' is a degree in Sanskrit. However, he continued to be a student of the Sanskrit College till December 4, 1841.

Though his training and learning consisted mostly of Sanskrit literature, language and philosophy yet Vidya-

sagar was quick to diagnose the causes of the intellectual amnesia so very characteristic of most of his contemporaries. The controversy between the orientalist and the movement started by Rammohan was going on unabated. In reply to Ballantyne's recommendations that more of Sanskrit and less of English should be taught to the Indian students, Vidyasagar stated his views in unequivocal terms. James R. Ballantyne was the Principal of the Sanskrit College, Benares. His recommendations to the Secretary of the Council of Education, Calcutta were sent for Vidyasagar's comments. In his comments sent on December 7, 1853 Vidyasagar, *inter alia*, stated :

The bigotry of the learned of India, I am ashamed to state, is not in the least inferior to that of the Arab. (The reference is to Caliph Omar who is alleged to have posed the dilemma supporting the destruction of the Library at Alexandria.) They believe that their Sastras have all emanated from omniscient Rishis and, therefore, they cannot but be infallible. When in the way of discussion or in the course of conversation any new truth advanced by European Science is presented before them, they laugh and ridicule. Lately a feeling is manifesting itself among the learned: when they hear of a Scientific truth, the germs of which may be traced out in their Sastras, instead of showing any regard for that truth, they triumph and the superstitious regard for their own Sastras is redoubled.

He further wrote :

With regard to Bishop Berkeley's Inquiry I beg leave to remark that the introduction of it as a class book would beget more mischief than advantage. For certain reasons, which it is needless to state here, we are obliged to continue the teaching of the Vedanta and Sankhya in the Sanscrit College. That the Vedanta (sic!) and Sankhya are false systems of Philosophy is no longer a matter of dispute. These systems, false as they are, command unbounded reverence from the Hindus. Whilst teaching these in the Sanscrit course, we should oppose

them by sound Philosophy in the English course to counteract their influence. Bishop Berkeley's Inquiry, which has arrived at similar or identical conclusions with the Vedanta or Sankhya and which is no more considered in Europe as a sound system of Philosophy, will not serve the purpose. On the contrary, when, by the perusal of that book, the Hindu Students of Sanscrit will find that the theories advanced by the Sankhya and Vedanta system are corroborated by a Philosopher of Europe, their reverence for these two systems may increase instead of being diminished.

Vidyasagar was almost echoing Rammohan. The marked contrast between his ideas and those of men like Swami Dayananda, Bankimchandra Chatterji, Aurobinda Ghose and others needs no elaboration. Vidyasagar, however, like Rammohan, knew that without a new way of looking at things and men, new social and individual actions could not be expected. His concern was not knowledge qua knowledge. Knowledge is not enough if it is not oriented round a deep concern and respect for the dignity of the individual human being, if it is not enlivened by a respect for man and nature.

What is surprising is that a man whose basic training was in Brahmanical Sanskrit orthodoxy, a man who never put on Western attire, except once in his life, a man who was so passionately attached to his family and friends, helped in revolutionising not only the language to which he contributed his genius but also tried his best to bring about a change in the attitude of his compatriots. He was a man who never lost his essential rootedness in his culture. He not only believed in the dignity of the individual but also stood as a living example of what he believed, so much so, that even his bittermost enemies among the orthodoxy could not resist the sense of awe which his personality inspired. He looked forward to the coming of a new complex of habits in place of the patterns of habitual dumb practices and emotions, things which he endeavoured to make matters of the past.

One of the evils of the Hindu society against which Vidyasagar fought was the ban on Hindu widow marriage. We can discern the traces of a movement against the Hindu custom of "an infant widow passing her life in a state of celibacy" as early as 1819. For, in a report of a meeting of the *Atmiya Sabha*—an organisation founded by Rammohan in 1815—held sometime in 1819 we read: "At the meeting ... the necessity of an infant widow passing her life in a state of celibacy, the practice of polygamy and of suffering widows to burn with the corpses of their husbands, were condemned". Soon the burning of widows with the corpses of their husbands was banned. But Vidyasagar had to fight hard to get a law in favour of widow marriage passed. He also struggled to eradicate the evil custom of polygamy.

The East India Company administration was not blind to the social movements started by Rammohan and his friends. The Secretary to the Law Commission, J.P. Grant, addressed a letter on June 30, 1837 soliciting the opinion of a number of judges on the desirability of widow marriage. But the Government could not go ahead with the legislation for fear of social upheaval and protest. What the Government did not dare to do, the young Derozeans, better known as the Young Bengal Group, took up. Their journal, *Bengal Spectator*, carried several articles protesting against the social cruelty. But they were considered to be upstarts and young rebels; and society, by and large, did not pay any heed to them. Hindu society lay dreaming or half-awake beneath the veil of faith, illusion, and childish prepossessions, through which it saw the world, society and the individual man clad in strange hues. Vidyasagar observed all this and prepared himself for a battle royal.

Vidyasagar was motivated to plunge deep into the movement for widow marriage not only because of his intellectual conviction but also because of his respect for the feminine person. His soul bled at the plight of feminine dignity in society, especially of the widows. His first article on widow marriage appeared in a journal—*Tattwabodhini*—and it was soon published in a book form

in January, 1855. He brought his vast learning of the *Dharma Sastras* to bear on the subject and proved that even they support widow marriage. Unlike the Young Bengal Group, he met the orthodoxy on their own grounds. The educated, including those among the orthodoxy, got interested in his writings as he was quoting the *Sastras* in support of his views. They did not, initially, take him as an infidel iconoclast. A fierce debate ensued between Vidyasagar and old Radhakanta Deb and his group. But Vidyasagar did not remain content by participating in the debate only. On October 4, 1855 he sent a petition to the Government of India signed by 987 people wherein the appeal for legalising widow marriage was made. This was possibly the first movement for the eradication of a social evil which shook the entire length and breadth of the country. There were letters from Bombay, Poona, Secunderabad, Uttar Pradesh, Satara, Dharwar, Ahmedabad, Surat, and various other places. His opponents, headed by Radhakanta Deb, submitted a counter-petition to the Government on January 19, 1856 signed by 36,763 men. Eventually the Government enacted a law legalising Hindu widow marriage on July 26, 1856. Vidyasagar took the fight to a new plane. In order to set living examples before society he inspired a number of men, including his own son, to marry widows. Those were the days when democracy was not debased to a formality of counting hands alone. The voices of the 987 were heard against the clamour of 36, 763; and the cause of a democratic way of life was enhanced.

The alert mind of Vidyasagar did not remain blind to any social crudities and oddities. He was at the helm of all movements for the eradication of social evils. His valiant fight for the cause of Hindu widows earned him universal respect; and his enthusiasm for banning polygamy and child marriage is a fact of history. Yet he was neither an iconoclast nor a radical. It was because of this that, though bitterly opposed to child marriage, he could write :

I should like the measure to be framed as to give something like an adequate protection to child-

wives, without in any way conflicting with any religious usage. I would propose that it should be an offence for a man to consummate marriage before his wife has had her first menses ... such a law would not only serve the interests of humanity ... but would, so far from interfering with religious usage, inforce a rule laid down in the *Sastras*.

The influence of the British utilitarians can be discerned here. What he wanted was to take the society with him along the line of progress. No one can do that by declaring a total revolt against the society. There was not a single well-meaning intellectual or social movement in Calcutta or its neighbourhood with which Vidyasagar was not intimately connected. His name travelled to far off Germany where he was recognised by the orientlists as a reliable correspondent. Inside the country the *Prarthana Samaj* of Maharastra appreciated his work; and he was elected fellow of the University of Punjab in the year 1883. It was because of his efforts that the Hindu Family Annuity Fund was formed to help the families whose earning member or members faced premature death. Possibly Vidyasagar is the first man to have thought of cost accountancy in regard to family expenditure. His scheme for the Annuity Fund was based on calculations of family expenditure.

Whenever there arose a new movement for staging dramas, Vidyasagar was associated with it. If someone wanted to translate Sanskrit classics into Bengali, he was always there to help him with his vast learning of Sanskrit language and literature and his mastery over the Bengali language to help him. If there was a movement for starting educational institutions, Vidyasagar supported it. When Mahendralal Sarkar was organising an institute for teaching the sciences, Vidyasagar could see the immense benefit that would accrue from such a venture. He not only supported that noble venture of teaching science in an institution managed by the Indians but also donated one thousand rupees to the noble cause. And that is the institute which produced the first Indian Nobel Prize winner in science—C.V. Raman. In recognition of

his scholarship and erudition Vidyasagar was elected an honorary member of the Royal Asiatic Society of London in 1864.

As an administrator he proved his worth when he worked with the Government from 1846 to 1858 as well as when he managed his own school. His school stood as the first significant testimony to the fact that the Indians were capable of running good and modern educational institutions on their own. He also had his contribution to make in the field of journalism. He was, for some time, the guiding spirit behind at least two journals, viz., *Tattwabodhini* and *Hindu Patriot*.

Vidyasagar's contribution to the Bengali language and literature can hardly be overemphasised. Though he was not the first man to use punctuation marks in Bengali prose, he is, beyond doubt, the first man to make a very effective use of them. He realised that Bengali language and literature could not develop without going to their Sanskrit roots. He undertook vigorous translations of Sanskrit classics and encouraged others to do the same. He was the first Indian to set up a model for editing the Sanskrit classics. But he also knew that Sanskrit was not enough to bring about the results which he desired. He campaigned for the introduction of English teaching even in the Sanskrit College. He was convinced, as Rammohan was, that neither the Indian languages nor the intellectual atmosphere in the country could find a break-through without the introduction of English. Mental revolution, revolution in attitudes must precede, logically precede, revolution in language, literature, society, etc. A new way of looking at things, a new way of writing the native languages, could not come without the impact of the West. In Vidyasagar the provocations of a noble discontent about the state of affairs around him gradually helped the emergence into prominence of a sense of criticism, founded upon appreciation of beauty, intellectual distinction, catholicity, compassion and piety. His keen critical appreciation of beauty is evidenced by his edition of Kalidasa's *Meghdoot*. From the texts available to him he had the hunch that some of the stanzas in the

great work were interpolations. Vidyasagar's hunch was authenticated long after his death through the discovery of an earlier manuscript of the book.

What Vidyasagar detested was not classical Sanskrit literature but the other-worldly outlook of the major tenets of Indian thought and their social effects. He was profoundly influenced by Hume and Mill and his acute logical mind and sense of realism convinced him that the most urgent intellectual need of his people was to get out of the morass of illogical and unrealistic attitudes in which they had lived for so long. His open support to Akshya Kumar Dutta's formula—Prayer+Industry =good harvest ; Industry=good harvest ; therefore, Prayer=zero and his complete apathy towards his contemporary, the sage of Dakshineswar, Ramakrishna Paramhansa, give us an idea of his philosophical convictions.

Akshay Kumar Dutta adopted Brahmoism in 1843. But while Debendranath Tagore and Keshabchandra Sen were eager to make Rammohan a religious seer, "the negative, critical and destructive part of the work of the *Brahmo Samaj*, thirty years ago, was principally done by him (Akshay Kumar Dutta)." Agnostic Dutta had to quit all relations with the *Brahmo Samaj*; and it was Vidyasagar who came to his succour. Vidyasagar's support for Dutta was not just a chance affair; there were strong intellectual bonds between the two. However, while Dutta was essentially a crusader against the superstitions of the Hindu society, Vidyasagar was essentially a teacher. He had a keen literary imagination and he moulded the Bengali language in such a way that it made the rise of men like Bankim, Rabindranath, and many others possible.

While he was trying hard to develop the Bengali language, the first hurdle that he had to cross was the absence of even a proper Bengali alphabet book. He set himself to work. And it is doubtful whether as yet Vidyasagar's pioneering work in this regard has been bettered or not. If he had not done anything but written only these Primers, posterity would have remained permanently indebted to him. The graded lessons which he

worked out would put even the most modern primers to shame. Equally significant is the total absence of any attempt to indoctrinate the children in any particular religious belief.

Vidyasagar not only wrote primers for Bengali children but also found it necessary to write simplified Sanskrit grammar books. Old Panini was not adequate for imparting knowledge of Sanskrit grammar in the span of two or three years. In this he was followed by R. G. Bhandarkar of Maharashtra. Both of them knew the value of Sanskrit language and literature; and both tried to teach it in a modern and rational way and not as a *Dev Bhasa*—language of the gods. Vidyasagar worked hard to fill up a big lacuna in the educational field—the absence of proper text books in the vernacular languages. He wrote school texts on geography, encouraged many text book writers to produce good books, started compiling a Bengali dictionary, and wrote the first few pages of his autobiography and his projected history of Bengal, besides publishing not less than 40 other volumes either written by him or edited by him.

Like Rammohan, Vidyasagar also knew that all his efforts would be lost in the wilderness if the women of the country were not brought in line with contemporary development. A glimpse of his zeal for spreading education can be had from the fact that between November 1857 to May 1858 while practically the whole of North India was being shaken by the mutiny of the Sepoys, Vidyasagar started at least 35 girls' schools in different villages of Bengal. The efforts of Miss Mary Carpenter to introduce female education more effectively in Calcutta would not have succeeded without the untiring support and help of Vidyasagar. In Calcutta the Metropolitan Institution with its three branches owed its origin to him. Besides these, he was also running a school and a charitable hospital in his own village. The major part of the princely income that he had from his publications was spent on the betterment of the society and on the amelioration of individual grievances, so much so, that the epithet. *Dayar Sagar*—

ocean of kindness—got attached to his name even during his life time.

Vidyasagar was neither a revolutionary nor did he breathe chaos. He was essentially a believer in piecemeal social engineering and saw the hollowness in grandiose schemes and plans. He had no messianic zeal. We cannot do better than to quote some of the remarks which Michael Madhusudan Dutt made on him. "Splendid fellow;" "The first man among us;" "Above flattering any man;" "Grand energy which is the companion of your genius and manliness of heart;" "Real friend and righteous heart;" "The genius and wisdom of an ancient sage, the energy of an Englishman and the heart of a Bengali mother;" and "One of Nature's noblest men" were the epithets used by him.

Vidyasagar was not an Englishman clad in Bengali dress. Neither was he a Bengali parading English manners. Men like Vidyasagar cannot be described by any national or parochial stereotypes. In him we get the view of a man who was one of us and yet far greater: a man who could appreciate the good, the true and the beautiful irrespective of geographical, national and social boundaries.

Even a rational humanist, as Vidyasagar was, got disgusted with the social atmosphere of the country. He, in his old age, found the crudities, duplicities and cruelties of the society and the people who composed the society with which he was concerned too frustrating. He used to run away from the city of Calcutta and live among the tribal people in Karmatar as if to get a glimpse and touch of life closer to Nature. His faith in the so-called sophisticated men started dwindling. Yet he did not lose his heart completely.

Vidyasagar died in Calcutta a somewhat tormented man on July 29, 1891. Possibly he was tormented at the idea that he could not do all that he wanted to do for the good of his people. He was no believer in providence or immutable laws of history. He was a stern realist. He knew where the shoe pinched him. He could see that his ideas and efforts were fast becoming hollow echoes of an expiring breath. Yet his name is remembered by all.

It is, however, one of the strange ironies of history that he is mostly remembered as a great philanthropist—as a Dayarsagar, an ocean of kindness, and hardly remembered as a committed humanist intellectual.

VII ORIENTALISTS AND ANGLICISTS

The controversy on the subject of oriental studies started practically since the inception of East India Company's rule over Bengal. The British orientalists, by and large, were not in favour of introducing the study of English and its literature in a thoroughgoing fashion. Thanks to Ram-mohan's efforts, a number of Englishmen were converted to a more fruitful point of view. Thus in a letter to his friend, Horton, Bishop Heber, the second Lord Bishop of Calcutta, wrote :

Government has, however, been very liberal in its grants, both to Society for National Education, and in the institution and support of two Colleges of Hindu students of riper age, the one at Benares, the other at Calcutta. But I do not think that any of these institutions, in the way after which they are at present conducted, likely to do much good.. The actual state of Hindoo and Mussulman literature, *mutatis mutandis*, very nearly resembles what the literature of Europe was before the time of Galileo, Copernicus and Bacon.... The task of enlightening the studious youth of such a nation would seem to be a tolerably straightforward one.... Of the value of the acquirements for which so much was sacrificed to retain, I can only judge from translations, and they certainly do not seem to me worth picking out of the rubbish under which they are sinking... The contrast was very striking between the rubbish which these young men were learning in a Government establishment and the rudiments of real knowledge which those whom I had visited the day before had acquired in the very same city, under circumstances far less favourable. (*Journey Through Upper India*, Vol. III, pp. 357-61)

It is likely that the British had a soft corner for the orientalist point of view, which advocated introduction of English only up to the standard sufficient for communication with the British officers as well for meeting their needs as envisaged by Radhakanta Deb, as the British, in Bishop Heber's words, were disliked for their "foolish, surly national pride and their bullying insolent manner." However, in all fairness to truth it must be said that the British were not that much prone to bullying insolent manners as recorded by Heber nor were they so much full of surly and foolish national pride. Some of the British orientalists genuinely believed in the greatness of Sanskrit learning. Then there were others who did not want to disturb the *status quo ante*. There were still others who saw the end of the British Empire in the propagation of knowledge acquired in the West to their colonies. The controversy between the orientalists and the anglicists came to such a pass that the Government was ultimately forced to step in. Thomas Babington Macaulay was at that time the Law Member of the Governor-General's council. The matter was referred to him. Macaulay submitted his famous Educational Minutes on February 2, 1835 wherein he adopted and defended the views of those who were in favour of disseminating knowledge acquired in the West through the medium of English. Bentinck accepted his opinion.

In these Minutes Macaulay rightly recognised that it was next to impossible at that time to educate the Indians "by means of their mother-tongue." He preferred English because

whoever knows that language has ready access to all the vast intellectual wealth which all the wisest nations of the earth have created and hoarded in the course of ninety generations.. The question.. is simply whether.. we shall teach languages in which, by universal confession, there are no books on any subject which deserve to be compared to our own; whether, when we can teach European science we shall teach systems which, by universal confession, whenever they differ from those of Europe, differ

for the worse ; and whether, when we patronize sound philosophy and true history we shall countenance, at the public expense, medical doctrines, which would disgrace an English farrier-astronomy, which would move laughter in the girls at an English boarding-school—history, abounding with kings thirty feet high, and reigns thirty thousand years long—and geography made up of seas of treacle and oceans of butter.

The Indian nationalists were always suspicious of the introduction of English in Indian educational institutions. By some strange sophistry they have superimposed the motive of the orientalist on Macaulay. There is hardly any one in India, interested in education, who does not open his lamentations on the sorry state of affairs in the field of Indian education, without an invective against Macaulay. Macaulay had to meet the arguments of the orientalist who wanted English to be taught solely for the purpose of recruiting clerks. He points out that if his recommendations are accepted, there will be no dearth of English-knowing clerks ; but the effect of introducing English in the system of education in India will be far more epoch-making than merely the production of clerks. To-day when many post-independence patriots in India have joined cause with the cult of illiteracy in the name of a national language and an *Angrezi Hatao* (Drive out English) movement, it is important to recall that the neo-nationalists are not saying anything new. The problem is as old as Methuselah. However, let us see Macaulay's observations on the 18th and 19th century Russian resurgence :

And how was this change effected ? Not by flattering national prejudices ; not by feeding the mind of the young Muscovite with the old woman's stories which his rude fathers had believed ; not by filling his head with lying legends about St. Nicholas ; not by encouraging him to study the great question, whether the world was or was not created on the 13th of September ; not by calling him 'a learned native,' when he has mastered all these points of

knowledge; but by teaching him those foreign languages in which the greatest mass of information had been laid up, and thus putting all that information within his reach. The languages of Western Europe civilized Russia. I cannot doubt that they will do for the Hindoo what they have done for the tartar.

Macaulay was a man of business with a vision. His intention was far from decrying the native languages. As a matter of fact his recommendations, he hoped, would help the development of the native languages and literature. New blood, he hoped, would be introduced into the otherwise dying currents of Indian literature. That Macaulay was substantially right is evidenced by the fact that the trend symbolised by Radhakanta Deb has not been able to produce a single good litterateur in any of the modern Indian languages. Even the contemporary litterateurs of Indian languages are all English knowing.

What the Government of India is trying to do to-day was tried by the East India Company in the early 19th century. Some people in the Company thought that by paying authors to write books in the Indian languages, they would be helping the development of those languages. Possibly this was the first attempt by an alien Government to help the development of Indian languages. But Macaulay was an erudite scholar and was himself the master of many classical and modern languages. He had the following to say :

To hire four or five people to make a literature is a course which never answered and never will answer, in any part of the world. Languages grow. They cannot be built. We are now following the slow but sure course on which alone we can depend for a supply of good books in the vernacular languages of India. We are attempting to raise up a large class of enlightened natives. I hope that, twenty years hence, there will be hundreds, nay thousands of natives familiar with the best models of composition, and well acquainted with Western science. Among them some persons will be found

who will have the inclination and the ability to exhibit European knowledge in the vernacular dialects. This I believe to be the only way in which we can raise up a good vernacular literature in this country.

Macaulay's hopeful anticipation was more than fulfilled. Within twenty years of his writing the foregoing, there were not hundreds but thousands who acquired scientific knowledge from the West through the medium of English and felt inspired to transmit the same through their vernaculars.

On the eve of the rise of British power in India all the Indian languages were suffering from stagnation. Most of the Indian languages had hardly any prose literature. Even the classical languages had become barren. The learned of the country confined their entire energy to Talmudistic discussions on the ancient scriptures. There was scarcely any sign of the growth of an understanding by which nature and society could be confronted anew. The growth of persuasive intercourse within the texture of society was halted. The art of clear thinking, of criticism of premises, of speculative assumption, of deductive reasoning, the power to assess assumptions in the crucible of experience, were all at a standstill. India refused to eradicate her reliance upon the sway of conquerors, and upon the rule of individual masters over their inferiors. Specially, the highly stratified Hindu society faced the challenge of new types of stratification. The country (especially, the Hindus) embarked upon a novel experiment of simultaneously maintaining herself at different levels of culture. There was the level of those who aspired to be near the dominant level of power. All these, however, opened new vistas for the Indian people.

Even the ancient literatures of the country got a fresh breathe of life because of the light thrown on them by scholars versed in scientific methods. Indians became conscious of their history. They also became conscious of the fact that there are different ways of looking at things, that other people can also have equally valid points of view. However, there were some people in England who

could see the implied dangers in Macaulay's recommendations. The subject came up for discussion in the British Parliament while it was considering the India Bill of 1853. Referring to those who opposed the introduction of English education in India, Macaulay said that it seemed to him that some people were of the opinion that by

encouraging natives to study the arts and learning of Europe, we are preparing the way for the destruction of our power in India. I am utterly at a loss to understand how, while contemning education when it is given to Europeans, they ... should regard it with dread when it is given to natives.

The credit for silencing the orientalist should not go to Macaulay alone. *The Simon Commission Report* (Vol. I, p.380) writes that

It is commonly (but quite erroneously) supposed the Macaulay's Minute of 1835 was the sole cause of the decision to take the latter course. (The course suggested by the Anglicists.) In fact forces were already at work represented by the Indian reformer Rammohan Roy, by David Hare, and by missionaries such as Alexander Duff, as the result of which the teaching of Western subjects through the medium of English was adopted and encouraged by the Government with a view to its being developed alongside the vernacular schools.

And Howell wrote in *Education in British India Prior to 1850* ... (p.18) that

It took twelve years of controversy, the advocacy of Macaulay, and the decisive action of a new Governor-General, before the committee could, as a body, acquiesce in the policy of Rammohan Roy.

An entirely new world opened before the Indians with the introduction of English education in the beginning of the 19th century. So long they were living in an almost insular society. The question of their being patriotic did not arise. It is no wonder that the first sign of patriotism is to be found not among the members of the orthodoxy but among those who belonged to the movement initiated by Rammohan.

However, the controversy between the Orientalists and the Anglicists continued for a long time. Macaulay's *Educational Minutes* did not bring the controversy to an end. Macaulay's *Minutes* were in favour of the so-called Anglicists. Doubtless, the contribution of the Orientalists towards the development of Indian languages and literature can hardly be over-rated. But it would be a travesty of truth if the contribution of the Anglicists towards bringing in a new way of thought upon the Indian horizon is underestimated. The acceptance of Macaulay's so-called Anglicistic ideas provoked the nationalistic feelings of a large section of the English educated gentry. It is significant that nationalism whether, Hindu or Muslim, was primarily taken up as a creed by a section of those English knowing gentry who were educated in a system of education based on Macaulay's *Minutes*. There was hardly any Hindu or Muslim nationalist trained solely in the oriental fashion. Girish Chandra Ghose, one of the able journalists of the second half of the nineteenth century, writes on January 6, 1862 :

There are those among us who look upon this state of things [the feeling of superiority among the British] with surprise. They call to mind the generation of Englishmen who, in past years, walked among our fathers without betraying the least symptoms of hatred ... they call to mind ... Jones, Colebrook, Wilson ... and ask how it is that the successors of such men be so unsympathetic ?

As regards Indian literature ... history, antiquities, the present race of Anglo-Indians [the Englishmen in India] ... are lamentably ignorant Jones, Colebrook, Wilson respected our fathers and looked upon us hopefully at least with melancholy interest, as you would look on the heir of a ruined noble. But to the great unwashed abroad we are simply niggers—without a past ; perhaps without a future. They do not choose to know us.¹

The obvious provocation was provided by what Macau-

1. cf. *Selections from the Writing of Girish Ghose*, ed. M. M. Ghose, Calcutta, 1919.

lay wrote in his Minutes of 2nd February, 1835. We read, *inter alia*, in these Minutes :

To sum up what I have said : I think it clear that we are not fettered by any pledge expressed or implied ; that we are free to employ our funds as we choose ; that we ought to employ them to teaching what is best worth knowing ; that English is better worth knowing than Sanskrit or Arabic ; that the natives are desirous to be taught English and are not desirous to be taught Sanskrit or Arabic ; that neither as the language of law nor as the language of religion, have the Sanskrit and Arabic any peculiar claim to our encouragement ; that it is possible to make natives of this country thoroughly good English scholars ; and that to this end our efforts ought to be directed.

But Macaulay's hyperbole and use of forceful language in an inimitable style did not stop at this. He also wrote :

I have no knowledge of either Sanskrit or Arabic. But I have done what I could to form a correct estimate of their values. I have read translations of the most celebrated Arabic and Sanskrit works. I have conversed both here and at home with men distinguished by their proficiency in Eastern tongues. I am quite ready to take the oriental learning at the valuation of the orientalist themselves. I have never found one among them, who could deny that a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia.

Doubtless, the feelings of those who read these Minutes and did not consider the spirit behind Macaulay's high-falutin enthusiasm for the introduction of English education in India were hurt. Nationalism is essentially a negative and restrictive cult with a wistful memory of earlier times. The so-called Anglicists provided one of the favourite hobby-horses of the nationalists.

VIII THE DEROZEANS

The first definite articulation of nationalistic sentiment among the Indians with its nostalgia for the past can be discerned in Derozio. In his poem *To India, My Native Land* he articulated the nationalistic feelings of Indians which were later on developed by others. He wrote:

My Country! in thy days of glory past
 A beautilous halo circled round thy brow,
 And worshipped as deity thou wert—
 Where is the glory, where that reverence now?
 Thy eagle pinion is chained down at last,
 And grovelling in the lowly dust art thou,
 Thy minstrel hath no wreath to weave for thee,
 Save the sad story of thy misery!
 Well—let me dive into the depth of time,
 And bring from out of the ages that have rolled
 A few small fragments of those wrecks sublime,
 Which human eye may never more behold;
 And let the guerdon of my labour be,
 My fallen country! one kind wish for thee!

Derozio was not a thoroughgoing nationalist. While impressing upon his students that deprivation of political liberty was at the root of India's misery, he also urged them to recognise the dignity of the individual and to protect and enhance his right to think freely and rationally. One of his students, Sarada Prasad Ghose, wrote on the 6th of October, 1841 in the *Bengal Hurkaru*: "Our deprivation of the enjoyment of political liberty is the cause of our misery and degradation." He also urged upon the journalists "to write continually on political subjects, pointing out the evils of the Government."

Derozio's answer to the charge of corrupting the youth by undermining their faith in God is one of the landmarks in the annals of intellectual movement in India. He wrote:

If it be wrong to speak at all upon such a subject,
 I am guilty; for I am neither afraid nor ashamed
 to confess having stated the doubts of philosophers
 upon this head, because I have also stated the solution
 of those doubts. Is it forbidden anywhere to

argue upon such a question? If so it must be equally wrong to adduce an argument upon either side, or is it consistent with an enlightened notion of truth to wed ourselves to only one view of so important a subject, resolving to close our eyes and ears against all impressions that oppose themselves to it?

.... Entrusted as I was for some time with the education of youth, peculiarly circumstanced, was it for me to have made them pert and ignorant dogmatists? ... I therefore thought it my duty to acquaint several of the College students with the substance of Hume's celebrated dialogue between Cleanthes and Philo, in which the most subtle and refined arguments against theism are adduced. But I have also furnished them with Dr. Reid's and Dugald Stewart's more acute replies to Hume, replies which to this day continue unrefuted. This is the head and front of my offending

...That I should be called a sceptic and infidel is not surprising, as these names are always given to persons who think for themselves in religion....

Kishorilal Mitra, one of Derozio's students, while reminiscing on his Hindu College days in 1861 said :

The youthful band of reformers who had been educated at the Hindu College, like the tops of the Khanchangunga, were the first to catch and reflect the dawn When had an opposition to popular prejudices, been dissociated with difficulty and trouble? ... To excommunication and its concomitant evils, our friends were subjected Conformity to the idolatrous practices and customs evince a weak desertion of principle. Non-conformity to them on the other hand is a moral obligation which we owe to our conscience.

Derozio himself versified his dream of the bright young man.

Expanding like the petals of young flowers
 I watch the gentle opening of your minds,
 And the sweet loosening of the spell that binds
 Your intellectual energies and powers.

.....
 What joyance rains upon me when I see
 Fame in the mirror of futurity
 Weaving the chaplets you have yet to gain,
 And then I feel I have not lived in vain.

Enthused by Derozio's ideas his students plunged into feverish activities. In no time Krishnamohan Bondopadhyay started the *Inquirer* to challenge Hindu obscurantism; Rasik Krishna Mallik inaugurated a bi-lingual journal—*Janananweshan*—with the ostensible purpose of instructing people in the “science of government and jurisprudence”. Tarachand Chakraborti started another journal called the *Quill*. This journal criticised the Government freely. In 1842 the Derozians started another journal called the *Bengal Spectator*. In 1843 Radhakanta Sikdar unfolded the story of his struggle against government officials who were indulging in the practice of forced labour in the Survey of India.

The first 15 years after Derozio's death tells us the story of the feverish activities of the Derozians. They started numerous journals to disseminate knowledge and information to rouse the feelings of their compatriots against the orthodoxy, against the government and against bigotry in social life. They talked of the freedom of the individual to think for himself and to lead a life chosen by himself. They could establish themselves in the society as men of character so much so that in those days truthfulness and College boy became almost synonymous. Haramohan Chottopadhyay of the Hindu College office of those days said that the Hindu College boys were “all considered men of truth: Indeed, the *College* boy was a synonym for truth and it was a general belief and saying amongst our countrymen, which, those that remember the time, must acknowledge, that ‘such a boy is incapable of falsehood because he is a college boy’.”¹

Naturally, those who had a vested interest in the old ideas and mores were alarmed. Their contemporary *Englishman* wrote that the Hindu College students “are all radicals, and the followers of Benthamite Principles. The

1. Sibnath Sastri, *Ramtonu Lahiri O Tatkalin Banga Samaj*. New Age, 2nd edition, Calcutta, 1957, p. 101.

very word Tory is a sort of ignominy among them.... they all belong to the school of Adam Smith." Several letters were published in the Bengal journal *Samachar Darpan* drawing attention of the people to the dangers of the ideas of the Derozians. Thus in a letter published in the *Samachar Darpan* in 1831 we read the complaints of a father. He writes that his son was a good boy; but after coming in contact with Derozio he had his "hair cut". He wears "European shoes", eats his meals "without bathing", speaks an "unintelligible" Bengali, has not learnt how to keep "bazar accounts", knows practically nothing of "ready reckoning". The father is saying that though his son knows many things about other countries and can tell "the name of any river or mountain in Russia....can give no account of his own country." He has completely discarded the codes of his caste and calls the "holy brahmins and pundits thieves, hypocrites and fools.. and is reluctant to sit with me because I have no great knowledge of English." Later when the enthusiasm of the Derozians died out Rajnarayan Bose wrote that "the light from the West had turned their head."

Derozio inspired his students to think rationally—a thing antithetical to the Hindu concept of the individual. But he had also a romantic nostalgia for the past of India. Romantic pride in the dignity of the individual soon led to romantic adoration of the nation.

IX DEROZIAN & LANDLORDS

In the February 1831 issue of the *Reformer*, a journal edited by Prosunna Coomer Tagore, an article entitled *The Capabilities of India* written by 'A friend to improvement' was published. The article, *inter alia* stated:

It is asked—is India possessed within herself of all those productions of nature which render her independent of foreign resources? Strictly speaking, there is no civilized nation which does not in some way or other depend upon foreign resources....
...without her (India's) dependence on England as the conqueror and possessor, her political situation would be more respectable and her inhabitants would

be more wealthy and prosperous. The example of America which shews what she was when subject to England and what she has been since her freedom, must naturally lead us to such a conclusion..."

The sensitive youth were feeling the ignominy of foreign rule. One of them wrote to the *Reformer* in July, 1831 protesting against the invidious distinction regarding admission to Government house: "This at once shews that the order (of discrimination) is founded upon no other ground than an invidious distinction between the conquered natives and their more favoured conquerors." In a remarkable article by Kylas Chunder Dutt, a student of the Hindu College, published in the *Calcutta Gazette* of June 6th, 1835 we read a strong reaction against the attitude of the British and their rule—an attitude which was described by Bishop Heber. We read:

The people of India ... had been subject for the last fifty years to every species of subaltern oppression. The dagger and the bowl were dealt out with a merciless hand and neither age, nor sex, nor condition could repress the rage of the British barbarians. Finding that every day the offences instead of being extenuated were aggravated, that no redress could be obtained by appeals either to the Lords or Commons, he (the Indian) formed the bold but desperate resolution of hurling Lord Fell Butcher, (Dutt's article was entitled *A Journal of Forty-eight Hours of the Year 1845*) Viceroy of India from his seat and establishing a government composed of the most patriotic men in the kingdom...with the rapidity of lightening the spirit of Rebellion spread through this once pacific people. It is easy for the historian and the bard to depict in the most lively colours the excesses committed by the revolutionary parties, but he only can truly judge of their situation who has been fellow-sufferer with those whose families, friends and companions have been butchered in cold blood—who has seen villages and towns laid waste by fire for illumination—who has beheld thousands of human beings compelled to desert

their home and country and seek refuge in dens of the earth, in the clefts of rocks or in the hollows of trees.

But the rebellion was crushed. Before the executioner's axe fell on his neck, the patriot addressed the people who gathered to witness the execution.

My friends and countrymen! I have the consolation to die in my native land and tho' heaven has doomed that I should expire on this scaffold, yet are my last days cheered by the presence of my friends. I have shed my last drop of blood in defence of my country and though the feeble spark within me is about to leave the frail frame, I hope you will continue to persevere in the course you have so gloriously commenced.

The Derozians came to the forefront and protested against such Governmental measures as they did not like. They talked about the trial by Jury, Indianisation of the services, freedom of the Press, emigration of indentured labour, amendment of the Charter Act of 1833, the drain of wealth from India and social evils. They did not remain content by talking amongst themselves only; a series of public meetings were held and a spate of articles came out in the press. Their patriotic fervour drew their attention to their own language. In 1833 the *Sarbatatwa Deepika Sabha* was formed. The members of the *Sabha* decided to speak only in Bengali in its meetings. In the same year they started publishing a bi-lingual monthly—the *Bignan Sar Sangrha*. In the first issue of the journal we read:

The aim of the conductors is to communicate chiefly among the natives of Bengal, such selections from works of European literature and science as may tend to enlarge the sphere of their moral sentiments and infuse a spirit of activity and enterprise in all those pursuits which conduce to the happiness or glory of man . . . It is not our intention, however, to err, as it is said Solon did, in leaning too much on the prevailing weakness of the people. Our object is not so much to amuse as to instruct, not so much

to lull them into self-complacency as to stimulate them to greater exertions and nobler purposes.

Those were the days when the Derozians were groping for all sorts of things. On the 20th of February, 1838 Tariney Churn Banerjee, Ramgopal Ghose, Ramtonoo Lahiry, Tarachand Chukerbuttee and Rajkrishna Day—all Derozians—sent out an appeal to about three hundred Indian gentlemen to attend a meeting on the 12th of March 1838 in the Calcutta Sanskrit College Hall to discuss the formation of a new society called *The Society for the Acquisition of General Knowledge*. The association started functioning from the 16th of May, 1838. The first standing rules of the society stated: "That it is highly desirable that a society be established among the young natives with the object of promoting mutual improvement and this society be denominated the *Society for the Acquisition of General Knowledge*". The subjects discussed in the monthly meetings of the *Society* gradually became more and more political. They were fully alert to the necessity of learning the sciences and engineering. With this end in view the Calcutta Mechanical Institute was founded in 1839. Among its founders, we find the names of Derozians like, Tarachand Chukerburtee, Peary Chand Mitra, Ramgopal Ghosh and others. The Derozians collected over 200 people in 1841 in North Calcutta and formed the *Deshahitaishianee Sabha* (Society for the Welfare of the Country). Delivering the main speech at the foundation ceremony of the *Sabha* Sarada Prosad Ghosh, a student of Derozio, said:

Ever since the commencement of the British supremacy in this country, the policy of our present rulers has been to deprive us of the enjoyment of political liberty ... (which) is the cause of our misery and degradation. The losses of happiness follow the losses of civil liberty as shadow does substance ... our present rulers pay a superstitious adoration to mammon and scruple not to adopt any means by which they can enrich themselves and reduce us to squalid poverty Such being the nature of the constitution of this country, are we not prompted by

all that is dear to man to adopt measures calculated to improve our condition ?¹

The *Sabha* also decided to keep itself in touch with the *British India Society of England*—an organisation for the purpose of focussing the attention of the British public on the grievances of the Indians. Moreover, it was decided that the membership of the *Sabha* would be open to all Indians irrespective of religion, caste, creed or sect.

With all these different organisations the Derozians were intimately connected. The meetings of the *Society for the Acquisition of General Knowledge* were generally held in Hindu College. On the 8th of February, 1843 when Dukhinaranjan Mookerjee was reading a paper Captain D.L. Richardson, Principal of Hindu College, who was present in the meeting jumped up and characterised the paper as "treason". He also expressed the opinion that he could not permit the precincts of either the Hindu College or Sanskrit College being "converted into a den of treason". So the Society shifted its headquarters to 31 Fouzdari Balakhana in February, 1843. Incidentally, it should be noted that the same Richardson joined the *Metropolitan College* in 1853 when it was started by Rajendralal Datta, a stalwart of Hindu orthodoxy. The institution, however, was short-lived. But the story behind its formation is worth noting. The Hindu College admitted a boy who was reported to be the son of Hira Bulbul, a very famous dancing girl of Calcutta. The Hindu orthodoxy protested against this, but could not have their way. Rajendralal Datta and some other members of the Hindu orthodoxy severed all connection with the Hindu College and started the new college. The Hindu orthodoxy had no objection to being taught by foreign Christians. Their main objections were against those members of the Hindu community who either left the Hindu fold or were critical of it or defied its codes.

Round this time, at the invitation of Dwarakanath Tagore, George Thompson came to Calcutta. Thompson was born in Liverpool in 1804. He first became widely known as an advocate of abolition of slavery in the British

1. *Bengal Hurkaru*, 6th October, 1841.

colonies. William L. Garrison, one of the leaders of the American anti-slavery movement and organiser of the *American Anti-Slavery Society* founded in December 1833, engaged the services of George Thompson as a lecturer against American slavery. Thompson went to the United States in the spring of 1834. The hostility to the cause of anti-slavery began to manifest itself in mobs organised to suppress discussions on the subject. And thus began what Harriet Martineau called "the martyr age in America." In the autumn of 1835 Thompson was compelled to leave America and he secretly embarked for England. Before his secret departure he was to address the *Women's Anti-Slavery Society of Boston*. The meeting was held without Thompson, and it provoked "a mob of gentlemen of property and standing." Garrison, who was present in the meeting, was almost denuded of his clothing, dragged through the streets with a rope by the infuriated mob. He was, however, rescued with great difficulty, consigned to the jail for safety, until he was secretly removed from the city of Boston.

Thompson came back to England and immediately engaged himself in anti-slavery work with renewed vigour. He also worked for the formation of the *British India Society* "to fix the eyes of the entire nation on the extent.. and the claims of British India." The group which formed the Society was known in British political slang as the "Young India" group. Inspired by George Thompson the members of *The Society for the Acquisition of General Knowledge* formed themselves into an organisation called the *Bengal British India Society* in April 1843. A glimpse of its aims and objectives can be had from the following resolution passed in a meeting held on the 20th of April, 1843 under the Chairmanship of George Thompson.

That a Society be now formed and denominated *The Bengal British India Society*; the object of which shall be, the collection and dissemination of information, relating to the actual condition of the people of British India, and the laws, institutions, resources of the country; and to employ such other means of

a peaceable and lawful character, as may appear calculated to secure the welfare, extend the just rights, and advance the interests of all classes of our fellow subjects.

Helped by Peary Chand Mitra, its first Secretary, the Society published a book entitled: *Evidence relating to the Efficiency of Native Agency in the Administration of the Affairs in this Country*. The honour of being the first full-fledged political organisation in India should rightfully belong to the *Bengal British India Society*. After going back to England Thompson claimed that he was appointed "Agent of the King of Delhi." In that capacity he addressed a letter to the Government on March 19, 1844.

Meanwhile, the orthodoxy did not remain idle. They floated association after association to protect their rights. It may be recalled that Radhakanta Deb, the doyen of Calcutta orthodoxy, was one of the chief men behind the movement against the Government's decision to impose tax on rent-free land. On March 19th, 1838 the *Landholders' Society* was formed to protect the rights of the landholders. Radhakanta Deb presided over its inaugural meeting and was elected a member of the Executive Committee of the Society.¹

On the 29th of October, 1851 the *British Indian Association* was formed in Calcutta and the wealthy Calcutta landowners merged with the *Bengal British India Society*. Radhakanta Deb became the first President of the new organisation and Debendranath Tagore was its first Secretary. Deb continued to be its President till his death on the 19th of April 1867. The following constituted the Executive Committee of the Association: Raja Pratap Chandra Singh, Raja Satya Churn Ghosal, Hara Kumar Tagore, Durga Charan Datta, Joy Kissen Mukherjee, Harimohan Sen, Ashutosh Deb, Ramgopal Ghose, Debendranath Tagore

1. In this connection, the dates given in the *Chronicle of the British Indian Association* by P. N. Singh Roy and in H. H. Dodwell's essay:—*Political Activities from Lord William Bentinck's Educational Policy (1832) to the Birth of the Congress Party (1884)*—are wrong. I have accepted the date given by Brajendranath Bandyopadhyaya in his biography of Radhakanta Deb as authentic.

—Secretary, and Degumber Mitra—Assistant Secretary. On behalf of the Committee, its Secretary, Debendranath Tagore, requested Radhakanta Deb and Raja Kalikrishna to accept the Presidentship and Vice-Presidentship of the newly formed organisation. Both of them accepted the offer. The organisation was definitely loaded with the members of the orthodoxy led by Radhakanta Deb. Only a few Derozians joined it. But those who did not, slowly dissipated their energies and ceased to be politically or socially significant. The problem is how could the two organisations whose motivations were apparantly so different merge into the *British Indian Association*? How could the students of Derozio and the Derozians merge themselves into an organisation led by the orthodoxy symbolised by Radhakanta Deb? How could Debendranath Tagore, a champion of *Brahmo Samaj*—a *Samaj* which vouched by the name of Rammohan, accept the Secretaryship of an organisation headed by Radhakanta Deb, a man whose main activities were directed against Rammohan's pioneering efforts? In order to probe into this problem, it will be necessary to look into the character of the orthodoxy with which we are concerned here, the character of the movement started by Derozio's students and the Derozians, and, especially, the place of the individual, *qua* individual in traditional Hindu society and the Hindu view of life.

X BEGINNINGS OF REVIVALISM : FAILURE OF THE DEROZIANs

From the beginning of the 19th century the Indian orthodoxy was divided into two groups. One group did not at all like to come out of the four walls erected round them by the *Dharma Sastras* and the customs and rituals prevalent in the country. The other group, possibly spurred by some type of economic compulsion, could see the value of keeping themselves in line, at least partially, with the developments that were taking place. Radhakanta Deb was the leader of this group. The first group was not active in public life. They provided sustenance to the second group from the background, as it were. The

group was formed by the numberless Brahmin pundits, priests and their followers who were spread throughout the length and breadth of the country. It would be wrong to call this amorphous collection of people a group, yet they formed a distinctive and easily recognisable section of the people. As a matter of fact their influence was more potent than the influence of any other group of people. The group of orthodox people led by Radhakanta Deb were, however, quite different from this group. For the sake of convenience we shall call this group as the English educated orthodoxy.

The English educated orthodoxy knew fully well that they could not resist the march of rationalism and individualism ushered in by Rammohan. Those were the days of Associations and Societies. The English educated orthodoxy took to these Associations and Societies as a fish takes to water. Radhakanta Deb himself was associated with a number of organisations which included *Hindu College, Calcutta School Book Society, Calcutta School Society, Agricultural and Horticultural Society of India, Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, Asiatic Society of Bengal, Saugor Island Society, Landholders' Society, British India Association, Dharma Shabha, etc.* The Imperial Academy of St. Petersburg, the Royal Academy of Berlin, the Kaiserlicher Acaemy of Vienna, the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, the Oriental Societies of Germany and America, the Asiatic Society of Paris, and the Royal Society of Northern Antiquities, made him honorary or corresponding member. He helped Miss Cook, who came to India in 1821 sponsored by the *Female Juvenile Society* and the *British and Foreign School Society* to spread education among women in India, in her work and wrote a book entitled *Stri Siksha Vidhayak*—A Plea for women's Education.

Radhakanta was the grandson of Raja Nabakrishna Deb, Robert Clive's agent and founder of the Shovabazar family. Radhakanta's grand father got him married to the daughter of the Goshtipati (the head of the clan) Gopikanta Sinha Chaturdhurina of Gopinagar. Because

of this marriage Radhakanta was subsequently elevated to the position of *Goshtipati*. This made him entitled "to the first honours in every formal assembly of the Hindus."¹ He took about forty years to complete his monumental Sanskrit encyclopedia—*Sabdakalpadrum*—in seven volumes. The first volume of this work came out in 1822 and the last in 1852. An Appendix was added in 1858. The editors of the *Sabdakalpadrum* wrote a short biography of Radhakanta wherein they, *inter alia*, stated :

So long as he could give play to his active energies, he was to be seen moving about in learned societies, forming schemes for the mental advancement of his countrymen, lending his prestige in every useful undertaking, and seeking opportunities to enlighten his mind by his constant attendance at the experiments in the Medical College, the evening lectures. . . at the Hindu College, or diverse scientific exhibitions at the house of his European friends: he used very often to beguile his afternoons at the Botanic Garden to hear the lucid explanation of the wonders of Botany, from the most intimate and erudite friend, the late lamented Dr. N. Wallich.²

There was no socio-cultural movement in Calcutta in which Radhakanta did not participate either as the principal opponent or as the stolid advocate. Bishop Heber who met him recorded his impression of the man on March 8, 1824.

He is a youngman of pleasing countenance and manners, speaks English well, and has read many of our popular authors, particularly historical and geographical. He lives a good deal with Europeans, and has been very laudably active and liberal in forwarding, both by money and exertion, the education of his countrymen.³

Girish Chandra Ghose, one of the noted journalists of mid-nineteenth century, while paying his tribute to Radha-

1. *Rapid Sketch of the Life of Raja Radhakanta Deb Bahadur* by the Editors of the Raja's *Sabdakalpadrum*, Calcutta, 1859, p. 17.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 30.
3. Rev. R. Heber, *Narrative of Journey*. . . , Vol. I, p. 71, First edition.

kanta Deb on the 14th of May, 1867 called him "the greatest Modern Hindu."¹

Radhakanta did not despise new movements and things; he only wanted them within the paradigm of a type of orthodoxy for which he stood. He was not adverse to new wine as such; he only wanted new wine in old bottles; but, very often, he did not care to see whether his old bottles were cracked or not. Unfortunately, there is as yet, no single good biography of this remarkable man.

Radhakanta was a conservative of a sort. Very often, the impact of one country on another belonging to different levels of civilisational development produce such personalities, especially so, among those who suffer under an arrogant inferiority complex. They see their own civilisation in a bifurcated manner and believe that they would be able to introduce new things, things belonging to a so-called alien civilisation, within the periphery of the old: even this old of their mind is a distorted version of the actual, historical old. Moribund conservative imagination is vitiated by the fallacy of bifurcation of civilisation as well as of culture. However, Radhakanta's conservatism seems to have been motivated by his implicit and explicit commitment to the orthodoxy in general and his interest in the maintenance of the system of which he was a direct beneficiary. His conservatism had an intellectual content and he knew the staff to which he was firmly anchored. He was not at all enthused by the mystics or the cult of neo-Hinduism and neo-Hindu spiritualism. In him we find the echoes of medievalism. He ignores the restrictions and vigour of the classical tradition. As an instance of this we may cite his zeal for defending the *Hindu Dharma* against the proselytising activities of the Christian Missionaries. Whatever the Christian missionaries did Radhakanta also tried to do; but he insisted that everything must be done under the leadership of the Hindus. In order to stop the proselytising activities of the Christian Missionaries, he started a free school for teaching English as well as an organisation called *Patitoddhar Sabha*—Society For the

1. Cf. *Selections from the Writings of Girish Chandra Ghose—The Founder and Editor of the Hindoo Patriot and the Bengalee* edited by his grandson Manmathanath Ghosh, Calcutta: 1912.

Upliftment of the Fallen—to reconvert all those Hindus who left the Hindu fold. The actual reason for Radhakanta's severing all relations with the Hindu College lies in the fact of Gurucharan Singh's joining the Christian faith in 1849. Gurucharan was a student of Hindu College. A few students of Hindu College like Krishnamohan Bandopadhyaya, Mahesh Chandra Ghosh and others had embraced Christianity earlier. But, it appears that Gurucharan's conversion to Christianity provoked Radhakanta to come to a final decision regarding his connections with the Hindu College—a College with which he was associated since its inception in 1817. Radhakanta raised a big rumpus on the incident. The Managing Committee of the College removed the name of the student from the rolls of the College. But the controversy went on. And ultimately Radhakanta severed his connections with the Hindu College on the 1st of June, 1850. In a letter to H. H. Wilson dated 1st October, 1851, he made the reasons for his resignation abundantly clear.

From the period that the former (The Hindu College) was placed under the Government patronage the Council of Education had been gradually encroaching on the privilege of the Managing Committee till under the Presidentship of the late Mr. Bethune this encroachment became so complete as to render the native members mere non-entities. This invasion of their rights has often brought the Council and the Committee in open collision with each other. On one occasion a serious difference arose between these two bodies on a subject involving the violation of certain fundamental rules of the College which terminated in the retirement of Baboo Prosunno-cumar Tagore the Governor of the College from his post. On a similar subject, after an interchange of many angry minutes between myself and the late President my feelings were so exasperated that I was obliged to dissolve my connection with the institution. Virtually there is no native management at present.

By "native management", Radhakanta, of course, had

in his mind, the management by the Hindu orthodoxy. This identification of 'native' with 'Hindu' is an endemic trait of the Hindu orthodoxy and of the Hindu nationalists. It, however, seems that the use of the word "native" in this sense was very common. For, even Rammohan used the word in the same sense.

While Radhakanta Deb was fighting for the reinstatement of the old Hindu society in its pristine glory, the Derozians busied themselves first with their inconoclastic pyrotechnics. Derozio and his students were essentially romantics. While the dark and tortuous paths which had to be traversed by all who would seek truth needed to be illuminated by the use of reason, logic, clear and distinct concepts, acute observation and often scepticism, Derozio extolled the attitude which strives to produce highly individual works that stress imagination and freedom from the past traditions, that give unbridled expression to human emotions.

Derozio asked his students to think for themselves, "To be in no way influenced by any of the idols mentioned by Bacon—to live and to die for truth." Radhanath Sikdar, one of his students, said that Derozio "has been the cause of that spirit of enquiry after truth, and the contempt of vice—which cannot but be beneficial to India." His student, Ramgopal Ghose, because of his teaching, could say: "He who will not reason is a bigot, he who cannot is a fool and he who does not is a slave." Madhav Krishna Mallik wrote in the journal of the Derozians—*Athenium*—"If there is anything that we hate from the bottom of our hearts, it is Hinduism." Ramkrishna Mallik refused to swear by the holy water of the Ganges in a court of law and he said: "I do not believe in the sacredness of the Ganges."

Derozio's students, however, could hardly develop his enthusiasm for individual freedom. Because of a lack of strong and clear intellectual content, their movement started soon to slide into emotionalism, so much so, that unlike the rationalists, whose approach to social affairs is always that of peacemeal engineering, they diagnosed only one prime cause for the miseries with which the Indian society was afflicted; and that one cause slowly but surely

acquired shape in their minds. Their own problems, problems of the English educated people was soon magnified into the problem of the country. They were the first people in India in whose mind the idea of political nationalism took shape. They were slowly arriving at the conclusion that political action for freeing the country from foreign domination was the panacea for all evils. The critical approach to traditional Hindu society soon gave place to emotional outpourings against the miseries of foreign rule. Cracks developed in their initial faith in the goodness of the foreign rule. Instead of facing their problems rationally and realistically, they succumbed to the temptations of the irrational. The English educated urban and semi-urban youth—alienated from the wider society—soon made their own problem the problem of the whole country.

Prior to the switch-over from Persian to English in the Law Courts, opportunities for the English educated were extremely limited. In the pages of *Samachar Chandrika* and *Samachar Purnachandrika* comments on the contrast between the “atheists” who were trying to eke out their livelihood as clerks and school teachers and the successful men like Ramkamal Sen and Radhakanta Deb of the previous generation were published. Most of the Derozians came from comparatively less affluent families.¹ The British colonial rule, however, began opening avenues for social and economic ascent for the Hindu College boys. The avenue for ending their sense of alienation and isolation was also opened.

The decline of the Derozian zeal for “atheism” started as early as 1831—almost simultaneously with their rise. It seems that they themselves were very hesitant and could not come to a definite decision regarding the conflict between the traditional Hindu society and their newly earned knowledge through the medium of English.² The Hindu revivalist theme, so very characteristic of Hindu nationalism, can be discerned among the Derozians. The

1. Cf. Ramtonu Lahiri *O Tatkalin Banga-Samaj* by Sibnath Sastri. Chs. 4, 6. and Kishorilal Mitra, *Hare Memorial Lecture*.
2. Cf. Alexander Duff, *India and Indian Missions*, Calcutta, 1839, p. 667.

Hindu revivalists think that for all their miseries the foreign rulers of India are to be blamed. And when they talk of foreign rulers, they mean not only the British but also the Muslim rulers of days prior to the advent of the British in the Indian horizon. Maheshchandra Deb, a Derozian, tried to balance his criticism of the Hindu *Sas-tras* with "the cause of the state of seclusion and imprisonment in which the females of this land are preserved may be traced to the tyranny of the Mohomendan Emperors."¹ And Pearychand Mitra wrote in 1840: "The ancient Hindu spirit of enterprise, which the storm of Muslim oppression has entirely extinguished ... will now be kindled and burnt in the bosoms of the rising generation, who will ... open sources of employment in the extensive field of commerce..."² The same tone can be discerned in Udaychandra Addhy's article which pleads for the vernacular language as a medium of instruction. He says that the vernacular language had been debased by "Muslim tyranny" and that was the reason for the neglect of works of Kabikankan, Kashiram Das, Krittibas, and Bharat-chandra.³ Like a typical Hindu nationalist student of Indian history he, however, forgets that all these men wrote under "Muslim tyranny". The waning of the vigour with which the Derozians started soon transformed them into pleaders for the greatness of the British rule. The strong streak of revivalism urged them to put all the blame on the Muslims. Dakshinaranjan Mukhopadhyaya "admitted the superiority, with all its fault of the Company's over the Mahomedan rule."⁴ Only in one article we find some respectful reference to the Muslim rule. This was written by Kylas Chunder Dutta and was published in *The Hindu Pioneer*.⁵ The article was captioned; *India Under Foreigners*. The article, inter alia, stated:

Our object is to contrast the governments of India under the Muhammedan and the British rulers

Notwithstanding the profane injunctions of the

1. Gautam Chattopadhyay, *Awakening in Bengal in Early Nineteenth Century*, p. 94.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 350.

3. *Ibid.*, Appendix I, pp. i-ii.

4. Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 392. 394 and 398.

5. Vol. I, no. 4, December, 1835.

Koran and the barbarous manner of its votaries, most of the conquerors of the faith of Islam allowed freedom of speech and writing unknown to the most civilized nations. Instead of depriving the country of its wealth and retiring to their native lands, the Muhammedan rulers, generally, made this country their empire and home.

Consequently it was their own interest to restrain, as much as possible, spoliation of the inhabitants. (Despite this) ...under most of the Muhammedan princes, the finest soil, the most favourable climate, and the highest intellectual powers did not preserve the people from extreme distress. The ravages of civil war, of pestilence, and of famine may be repaired, but nothing can enable a nation to contend against the deadly influence of systematic spoliation ...The Muhammedans patronised merit wherever it was to be found, the English, like the primitive Hindus, have one *caste* of men to govern the general body. In the time of Akbar we find amongst the nobility of officers of government a host of respectable Hindus....And lately under Allivardi Khan, Raja Manik Chand was the Governor of Calcutta, and Raja Ramnarain Governor of Bihar. Can a parallel be found under the mild English? We blush to answer, No!

In conclusion we have only to remark that notwithstanding the manifold advantages that we have derived from the formation of roads, canals, bridges, the introduction of foreign commodities, the extent of commerce, and the dissemination of knowledge, the still existing evils are by far too numerous.

The violent means by which Foreign Supremacy has been established and the entire alienation of the people of the soil from any share in the Government, nay, even from all *offices* of trust and power, are circumstances which humanity must ever regret, and which the heart of every lover of his species will tell him no commercial, no political benefits can ever authorise or justify.

Dutta focussed the grouse of the educated gentry against the Government in unmistakable terms. His main complaint was against "one caste of men to govern the general body" and against the "entire alienation of the people of the soil ... from all offices of trust and power." Many of the English educated were actually pleading for jobs. In the Bentinck papers we read Rasikkrishna Mallik writing about his economic distress and social persecution. We also find David Hare and Ryan urging upon Bentinck "to give honourable or appropriate employment" to English educated Hindu youths.¹ Among the Hindu English educated gentry we hardly find any awareness of the masses of the people. The only thing that they knew was the Hindu community from where they came. Even this awareness was confined to the particular section of the Hindu community to which they belonged. It must, however, be said that whatever educated section of Muslims was there at that time, that section hardly showed any awareness of the Hindu community.

The British assumed power mostly from the Muslim rulers; and this was especially so in Bengal. When the British assumed power in Bengal they found, it is said, that one-fourth of the lands of the province were being used as rent-free grant. Most of this land was held by Musalmans and Muhammedan foundations. Hastings observed this in 1772. In 1793 when Lord Cornwallis introduced the system of Permanent Settlement he strongly advocated the inalienable rights of the Government to rent-free grants which had not obtained the sanction of the Ruling Power. In 1819 the Government thought about the problem seriously and it was found out that "At an outlay of £800,000 upon resumption proceedings an additional revenue of £3,000 a year was permanently gained by the State A large part of this sum was derived from lands held rent-free by Musalmans or Muhammedan foundations."² The resumption proceedings, however, were actually implemented in 1828 and finally terminated

1. Cf. Salauddin Ahmed, *Social Ideas and Social Change in Bengal. 1818-1835*, Leiden, 1965, p. 45.

2. Cf. W. W. Hunter, *Our Indian Musalmans*.

in 1846 in the wake of a storm of protests. We find Ram-mohan petitioning against the Resumption Proceedings and we have already mentioned Radhakanta Deb's reaction to it.

The Muslim zamindars, whatever their number was, were dislodged from their position by the introduction of the Permanent Settlement. The Bengali Hindu mercantile capital in order to add to their prestige spent their accumulated wealth in buying Zamindaris. Mostly they refrained from pumping back the capital which they accumulated from trade and commerce into the same source. The field thus left by them was soon occupied by non-Bengali mercantile capital. W.W. Hunter observes: "...Disastrous as was the effect of the Permanent Settlement on the economic position of the Mussalmans (their classes were by it largely divested of their landed possessions and their masses shared in the general economic ruin of ryots), the Resumption Proceedings spelt for them a mightier disaster still."¹ It may be mentioned here that because the British assumed power from the Muslim rulers, very few Muslims were found co-operating with the British in their growing trade and commerce. Moreover, the Bengal Muslims were not very much known for their commercial and trade activities. It is also likely that the British were reluctant to induce the Muslim traders to cooperate with their trade and other activities as they snatched political hegemony from the Muslim rulers. However, Calcutta, the new trading center, hardly attracted the Musalmans. Whatever Muslim capital or commercial entrepreneurship was there felt itself reluctant to extend a hand of cooperation to the British merchants, possibly because of a feeling of lost glory and rise of fanaticism.

P. Hardy in his book *The Muslims of British India*² has challenged Hunter's contention that the Muslims were especially affected by the Permanent Settlement and the Resumption Proceedings. He writes:

The Muslim cultivator, zamindars and taluqdar did

1. *Ibid.*

2. P. Hardy, *The Muslims of British India*, Cambridge, 1972.

not suffer more than others from the introduction of landlordism, although in Bengal there were more Muslim cultivators to suffer.¹

Are we to assume then that the number of people suffering in the two communities made no difference to the two communities? Hardy acknowledges that there were "more Muslim cultivators to suffer."

And on the previous page we find him writing:

In sum then, the establishment of British rule in India affected different classes of Muslims in different ways. For a minority it destroyed not a livelihood, but a way of life, and damaged not so much their pocket as their pride.

So, on the whole, the effect of the assumption of power by the British in India was disastrous on the Muslims in general. The Muslims themselves were sullen at their position. And this partially explains the popularity of the Wahhabi movement among them.

When Saiyid Ahmed of Rae Barilly (1786-1831) went to Mecca on a pilgrimage he came to know of the movement started by Abdul Wahhab, the mid-eighteenth century Arab reformer. Abdul Wahhab was a revivalist and stood for the revival of Islam strictly in accordance with the Quran. A land governed by people other than those of the Islamic faith as interpreted by him was a land of the infidels. The Muslims must endeavour to make that land a land of Islam. Saiyid Ahmed was also influenced by Chisti Nagshabandi and the Qadri mystics. On his return from Mecca he started the Wahhabi movement and the movement in no time acquired menacing proportions. Hunter writes: "The Wahhabi rebellion which had started long before the Sepoy Mutiny assumed menacing proportions during that widespread uprising, and continued almost unabated till the Wahhabi trial of 1868."² The movement initiated by Saiyid Ahmed was continued by Haji Shariat-Ullah (1781-1840), his disciple Dudu Miyan, Titu Mir, Siddiq Hasan (d. 1890) Sayid Nazir Hussain (d. 1902) and many others. They campaigned for complete confor-

1. Ibid, p. 50.

2. Cf. W. W. Hunter, *Our Indian Mussalmans*.

mity to Prophetic tradition. The Muslim recalcitrant attitude coupled with their feeling of sullenness at the advent of the British and their concern for establishing the Islamic land in India, their claim that their ancestors came from the holy land of Islam made them reluctant to be near their British rulers. The reluctance might have been enforced by the British attitude. For, "before 1857 British policies were generally speaking 'community blind'; Muslims were members of a 'fallen race' or in George Campbell's words 'the most gentlemanly and well-mannered'¹ of those seeking employment under the Company. By 1889, however, for the then Viceroy, Lord Dufferin, they had become 'one of the two mighty political communities' of our Indian 'cosmos'."² A glimpse of the British attitude towards the Muslims can be had from Bentinck's Minute of 30th May 1829.

...So long as they (Mussalmans) profess the intolerant doctrines of their prophet and remember the station they once held, their hostility can be neutralised by their interests and their fears and by their knowledge of our power.³

The reluctance of the Muslims to come near the British rulers and their feeling that the Hindus, in collusion with the British, had deprived them of their rightful place in the country widened the political and social distance between the two communities. The existence of the Muslim community found hardly any place in the writings of the Hindus; and the Muslims, in their turn, did not care to comment on Hindu society. New sects of Muslims like the Ahmediyya sect came up. The founder of the Ahmediyya sect of Musalmans claimed that Jesus was saved from the Cross and died a natural death in Kashmir and that the promised Messiah before the day of *Roz-keya-Mat* will be someone with the attributes of Jesus. The founder of the sect Mirza Ghulam Ahmed (1839-1908) had all those attributes. He claimed that he was the promised *Mahdi*.

1. George Campbell, *Modern India*, London, 1852, p. 291.

2. P. Hardy, *The Muslims of British India*, Cambridge, 1972, p. 60.

3. Irish University Press Series of British Parliamentary Papers, Colonies East India 5, p. 279.

A number of such *Mahdis* appeared in the Indian scene during this period.

However, by 1867 Maulana Muhammad Qasim Nanotwari founded the *Deoband School*—an Islamic Seminary which stood for orthodox Islam. On the other hand, we find Sir Syed Ahmed founding the Aligarh School for the reformation of the Muslims. It is significant that even Hume, the founder of the Indian National Congress, expected support from the Deoband School as he hoped for support from the Ullemas and not from the School started at Aligarh.¹ The orthodox Muslims gave some support to the Hindu nationalist cause as they thought that once they were able to drive out the British with the help of the Hindus, it would be easier for them to establish a rule according to Islamic principles. However, the fact is, nationalism in India followed two channels—one followed by the Hindus and the other by the Muslims. The Derozians who might have traced a new way if they were steadfast in their original inspiration, failed to do so. They could not get out of the dichotomy of Hindu revivalism and assertion of the dignity of the individual qua individual. As a matter of fact the students and admirers of Derozio, surrendered their enthusiasm for the establishment of the dignity of the individual to Hindu revivalism. This facilitated the merger of their organisation with the organisation of the landholders and they agreed to work in an organisation headed by Radhakanta Deb who led the tirade against the corruptor of the youth. None of Derozio's students or Rammohan's followers could stick to their mentors' enthusiasm for the individual's rational self-assertion, though initially they provided a real threat to the Hindu orthodoxy. They were not made of the stuff of which Rammohan, Derozio or Vidyasagar were made. The corrupted youth returned to the fold. Was it the return of the prodigal son or an instance of intellectual bankruptcy?

The Hindu concept of the individual is to be found in two distinct and unrelated levels—the metaphysical and

1. Cf. Letter to Tyabji, dated 5 November, 1888, *Tyabji Papers*, Microfilm, Reel No. 2.

the empirical. In the metaphysical or transcendental level when the existence of the individual self is recognised, it is given a complete freedom, nay, it becomes one with the cosmic self and, according to certain interpretations, the question of the existence of the individual self is recognised but its relationship with the cosmic self or consciousness cannot be talked about. In either case the question of the freedom of the individual self is lost in the mumbo-jumbo of some transcendental self or cosmic consciousness. The individual self finds its reasons and bliss only in or in relation to a cosmic transcendental self or consciousness.

At the empirical level, however, the Hindu view of the individual is more concrete and matter of fact. The individual is bound by traditions, mores and the codes of the *Sastras*. His commitment is to a pluralistic universe and society where the Hindu packs up his logic and sends it to the wilderness. His society is an agglomerative one and so is his mind. He follows Manu's dictum that one must follow the *Dharma Sastras* and that if there is a contradiction between the *Dharma Sastras* and the *Vedas*, he should take the *Vedas* to be more authentic. "But when two sacred texts (*Sruti*) (the *Vedas*) are conflicting, both are held to be law; for both are pronounced by the wise (to be) valid law."¹ To a Hindu his birth determines his duties. For, here is what the *Laws of Manu* asks the Hindus to keep in their minds:

But in order to protect this universe, He, the most resplendent one, assigned separate duties and occupations to those who sprang from his mouth, arms, thighs, and feet.²

A commitment, not chosen by an individual, can be accepted as a duty by the individual without any knowledge of its consequences. The knowledge of the consequences of a particular act cannot make any difference to its being a duty. If knowledge of the consequences is not a *sine qua non* of duty, one can do his duty without desiring anything. In this sense *Nishkam Karma*, so much

1. *Laws of Manu*, Buhler's translation, Chap. II, 14.

2. *Ibid.*, Ch. I, 87.

emphasised by the *Gita*, is possible. But, then the question is: Can we attach any moral worth to such an act? Determination of an action by past commitment—past commitment on which the individual had no choice, as no one is ever consulted before his birth as to whether or not he would like to be born, is not sufficient to make that act valuational—to make it moral. To the Hindu *moral* acts are not acts of individual choice and commitment. They are not acts of personal adventure; they are not results of his personal encounter with the realm of possibilities. To him the touchstone for determining what in the ultimate analysis, are man's duties, is the *Sastras*. His station and duties in this life are determined by the fact of his birth.

Initially the Derozians found this aspect of the Hindu view of life antithetical to human reason and the dignity of the individual. But unlike Derozio or Rammohan, the Derozians were men of much less mental vigour and spiritual fortitude. For about a decade after the death of their mentor, the Derozians, on the whole, struggled to sing the glory of the newly discovered individual, a discovery made possible by the impact of the West on India. But soon they found that foreign rule was an impediment to the individual's self-assertion. Foreign rule saps out the manhood of the subjugated people. The Hindu orthodoxy also discovered that British rule was a challenge to their vested interest as it was disturbing the Hindu social fabric.

Despite their initial concern for the freedom of the individual the Derozians were hardly conscious of the existence of the masses of the people. Very rarely do we find any consciousness of the existence of Muslims or the peasantry in the writings of the Derozians. This is also true of the English knowing Hindu orthodoxy. There are only a few solitary exceptions to this rule. Bankim wrote on the peasantry, and so did his elder brother. But Bankim's interest in peasantry only occupied a little part of his mighty genius. Whatever consciousness of the existence of the people which the Derozians or the English knowing Hindu orthodoxy evinced was confined to their

knowledge of the urbanised or semi-urbanised Hindus and their *Dharma Sastras*. Their ideas of the people soon became populist. The door for Hindu nationalism was wide open before them. They were mostly concerned with the evils of foreign rule insofar as it affected them and they talked about the plight of the people without evincing any knowledge of their actual condition. In short, the non-empirical attitude of the Derozians and the English knowing Hindu orthodoxy facilitated the return of the Derozians to the fold.

However, the merger of the two organisations—the organisation of the Derozians and that of the landholders marked the end of the independent activities of the intellectuals which had been free from the patronage of the English knowing orthodox Hindus. Henceforward the intellectuals had to remain by and large, content either within the portals of the educational institutions, or by toeing the line laid down by the Government, or by playing second fiddle to the politicians or the powers that be. The nationalists slowly offered a criticism of society from the point of view of a backward-looking utopia. Yet they made a big step forward compared to the *Dharma Sabha* people by posing for the attention of the educated people problems which the guardians of the Hindu society were not able to pose. This is possibly the reason why Hardy, following Redfield and Milton Singer, calls them “Cultural brokers”. Singer defines the “Cultural brokers” as “a new type of professional intellectuals ... who stand astride the boundaries of the cultural encounter, mediating alien cultural influences to the natives and interpreting the indigenous culture to the foreigners.”¹ The educated gentry of India at least during the first half of the 19th century did not think of ‘cultural brokerage’, though the English orientalist might have acted as cultural brokers. “Cultural brokerage” may be a characteristic of the rise of Hindu political nationalism symbolised by men like Swami Vivekananda. Neither Rammohan, nor Derozio,

1. M. Singer, “The Great Tradition in a Metropolitan Center: Madras,” in *Traditional India and Structural Change*, Philadelphia, 1959, p. 141.

nor Vidyasagar, nor Madhusudan, nor Akshya Kumar Dutta, nor Radhakanta were cultural brokers. "Cultural brokerage" marks the end of all rationalistic discernment. Under its influence rationalism soon deteriorated into rationalisation; and the trend of "cultural brokerage" was set by the rising Hindu nationalists. Realism was replaced by a romantic adoration of India's past and later by populist outpourings on the greatness of the masses and the spirit of self-sacrifice. The road to Hindu nationalism was cleared of all rationalistic hesitations, scepticism and concern for the freedom of the individual. The era of small, local groups of intellectuals for thrashing out specific problems was almost over. The principal aims and objectives of the *British Indian Association*, however, were :

to promote the improvement and efficiency of the British Indian Government by every legitimate means in its power, and thereby to advance the common interests of Great Britain and India, and ameliorate the condition of the native inhabitants of the sub-continent; to make such respected but earnest representation to the Parliament of Great Britain, in connection with the ensuing East India Company's Charter, with a view to removing the existing defects in the laws and civil administration of this country, and to promote the general welfare and interests of its people;

to try for the removal of existing and prevention of proposed injurious measures, or for the introduction of enactments which may tend to promote the general interests of all connected with this country.

Soon after its formation the Association had to act as the renewal of the East India Company's Charter was impending. On December 11, 1851, Debendranath Tagore, the Secretary of the Association, wrote to some leading persons of Bombay, Madras and of the city of Agra that:

It must be obvious to you that the representations would have great weight if they were made simultaneously by the Natives of every part of British India or by a society having just pretensions

to represent them. There are, however, advantages likely to flow from the union of the Native gentlemen of the other three Presidencies with the British Indian Association, which should not be overlooked.

It is significant to note here the technique of mass petition was initiated by the orthodoxy led by Radhakanta Deb when in July, 1819 a "great number of the most respectable Hindu inhabitants of Calcutta" submitted a petition opposing the *Satee* orders of the Government, *The British Indian Association* continued its activities. Sir Barnes Peacock, Chief Justice of Calcutta, moved a Bill to bring the Englishmen in India under the jurisdiction of the Company's law. The Englishmen in India objected to this and said that they should be judged only by Englishmen. They held meetings in Calcutta. *The British Indian Association* did not sit idle. They called a meeting in Calcutta in 1857 to protest against the attitude of the Englishmen and submitted a petition signed by 1,800 people opposing the views presented by the Englishmen. George Thomson, who came back to India that year, was present in the meeting.

But what is intriguing is the fact that Debendranath Tagore who became the leader of the *Brahmo Samaj* after about a decade of Rammohan's death became the Secretary of an organisation—*The British Indian Association*—whose President was Radhakanta Deb almost a life-time adversary of Rammohan. And this was made possible because Debendranath deviated from the spirit that Rammohan enshrined.

Shivnath Sastri in his *History of the Brahmo Samaj* writes :

As the first step after his conversion, he (Debendranath) thought of starting a society for the dissemination of the precious truths which he found in the Upanishads.¹

But this is not all. Sastri further writes :

In the conflict with the Christian Missionaries Devendranath, at this time, found a valuable co-

1. Shivnath Sastri, *History of the Brahmo Samaj*. Vol. I, p. 86.

adjutor in young Rajnarain Bose, who had then recently joined the Brahmo Samaj. The *Patrika* (*Tattwabodhini Patrika* of Debendranath) articles were from his pen and they were subsequently published in tract form under the title *Vedantism Vindicated*.

Thus it will be seen that in 1845 the Vedas were publicly proclaimed as the basis of the religion of the Brahmo Samaj and the religion of the Samaj was held up as Vedantism. As an outcome of the controversy with the Christians, great prominence was given to the doctrine of Vedic infallibility in the pages of the *Patrika* during the next two or three years, and the best arguments in its favour were adduced to silence doubtful critics.

....chiefly through the influence of Devendranath, the columns of the *Patrika* were being thus used for the purpose of preaching the doctrine of Vedic infallibility..¹

Rammohan also faced the Christian Missionaries. But he did not believe in the infallibility of the Vedas. Sastri informs us that Rammohan fell back upon the *Vedanta*, not the *Vedas* as a kind of convenience. We have noted Rammohan's caustic remarks on the *Vedanta*. Here is what Sastri writes :

...He met at the outset with a serious difficulty. How was he to awaken them? He felt....that the mass of his countrymen had fallen into such a state of abject mental and spiritual slavery, that a simple appeal to their reason and common sense would be ineffectual, and that they would not pay heed to anything unsupported by the authority of what they considered to be their sacred books. Accordingly, he fell back upon the monotheistical writings of the *Vedanta*, which were of unquestionable authority in matters of Hindu theology.²

What to Rammohan was a matter of convenience became a matter of creed with Debendranath. He was the

1. *Ibid.*, pp. 99-100.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 67.

son of Dwarakanath Tagore, a close friend of Rammohan and was born in 1817. It is said that before Rammohan left for England he told the boy Debendranath: "I leave you as successor to my *guddi*." However, Debendranath formally joined the *Brahmo Samaj* in 1843. After the death of Ramchandra Vidyabagish, the most faithful among Rammohan's followers insofar as his religious ideals were concerned, in 1844, Debendranath became the leader of the *Samaj*.

Debendranath had a deep interest in the Vedantic religion even prior to his joining the *Samaj*. With the seeming purpose of cultivating and propagating the Vedantic religion of his conception he formed the *Tattwabodhini Sabha* in 1838. In a few years' time the membership of the Sabha attracted a number of people who did not belong to the *Brahmo Samaj*. With the ostensible purpose of teaching *Vedanta*, Debendranath started a school named *Tattwabodhini Pathshala* in 1840. In 1843, at his behest, a virtual organ of the Sabha named the *Tattwabodhini Patrika* started appearing with Akshay Kumar Dutt as its first editor. Vidyasagar agreed to take the charge of the general supervision of the *Patrika*. Dutta was a rationalist to the core. His articles on science, criticism of the Hindu society and even criticism of the *Vedas* and *Vedanta*—the two chief sources of post Rammohan *Brahmo Samaj*—started appearing in every issue of the *Patrika*. Because of his criticism, Debendranath finally came out with a re-statement of the principles of the *Brahmo Samaj*. In 1850 he published his book *Brahmodharma*. A measure of the popularity of the *Patrika* can be had from Rameshchandra Dutta's words:

People all over Bengal awaited every issue with eagerness... Discoveries of European science, moral instructions, accounts of different nations and tribes, of the animate and inanimate creation of all that could enlighten the expanding intellect of Bengal and dispel darkness and prejudices found a convenient vehicle in the *Tattwabodhini Patrika*.

But Debendranath himself was not happy at the turn that his *Patrika* took under the editorship of Dutta and the

general supervision of Vidyasagar. Ultimately Akshay Dutta severed his connection with the *Patrika* in 1855. The *Tattwabodhini Sabha* also came to its natural end.

When we talk of the collaboration between the students of Derozio, Debendranath, Vidyasagar, Akshay Kumar Dutta, Radhakanta Deb and his followers, we should remember that the cleavage within the English educated, urbanised and semi-urbanised Hindu gentry of those days was not so sharp as to thwart any co-operation between them on specific issues. Their bigotry or their conviction hardly made them unidirectional with a one-track mind. We find any number of instances of co-operation between people with apparently completely different attitudes and frame of mind. Whatever extremist views arose in the country lost its givour in the Hindu penchant for agglomeration. And this continues to be the state of affairs even to-day. This appears to be the hard rock against which all analysis in terms of categories seems to be something like an exercise in futility.

However, unlike Rammohan, Debendranath's forte slowly took shape as some type of non-logical, non-rational plank. We are told that some time in 1862.

the voice came to him to appoint Keshub a minister of the *Samaj*. . . . On the appointed day after the usual divine service, Debendranath said . . . 'on this day by the command of Almighty God, I do appoint Keshub Chunder Sen, a minister of the *Brahmo Samaj*.' Then he presented to the latter a copy of the book called *Brahmo Dharma*, with a formal appointment letter conferring on him the title of *Brahmananda*—meaning one whose delight is in God.¹

This is possibly the first time when an English educated Hindu, interested in matters public, talked of "the voice". We do not find any mention of the "voice" even in the conservative Radhakanta. Subsequently "the voice" became a sort of crutch with all the neo-Hindu spiritualists and their apologists.

Keshub Chunder Sen was the son of Peary Mohun Sen

1. *Ibid.*, p. 139.

and grandson of Ram Kamal Sen, a staunch supporter and associate of Radhakanta Deb. He was born in 1838 and died on the 8th of January 1884. In 1856 he was expelled from the Senior Scholarship Examination for taking recourse to unfair means. This might have been one of the motivating factors for his turning towards prayer and meditation. However, in Debendranath's action according to "the voice" some of his old associates read nothing but his high-handedness. The germs of dissension affected the *Samaj*. But an important rift in the *Samaj* took place when Keshub challenged the authority of Debendranath. The man whom Debendranath appointed as a minister of the *Samaj* and dubbed as *Brahmananda* "by the command of almighty God" developed the feeling in him that he was a prophet, or at least very near a prophet. Keshub engaged himself in feverish activities and travelled to different parts of India with the message of *Brahmo Samaj* as interpreted by him. In 1870 he went to England and stayed there for about six or seven months and did propaganda for the *Samaj*. Keshub may be regarded as the first Indian "cultural broker". The old members of the *Brahmo Samaj*, however, did not appreciate Keshub's 'cultural brokerage' and his eagerness to transform the Brahmo outlook into some type of syncretism. On the 11th of November 1865, within three years of his appointment as a minister of the *Samaj* by Debendranath, dictated by "the voice", Keshub formed a new *Brahmo Samaj* and called it *Bharatbarsya Brahmo Samaj—Brahmo Samaj of India*. Quite a substantial section of the young *Brahmos* joined him. Debendranath retired from active participation in the affairs of the *Brahmo* movement. By 1878 another rift occurred. A group of *Brahmos* revolted against Keshub and formed the *Sadharan Brahmo Samaj*. The cause, at least one of the causes of the rift, was the marriage of Keshub's minor daughter with the son of the Maharaja of Cooch-behar. Keshub's sophistry and his claim that he was in communion with the Divine could not save his *Samaj* from a rift. Debendranath sent his blessings to the new *Samaj* from his retirement. This is the story of how a great movement started by Rammohan dissipated itself in the

wilderness of theological and Talmudistic activities with its concomitant of personal self-aggrandisement. Rammohan's rationalism was forgotten. Some tried to elevate Rammohan to the position of a religious seer, while others, on their own, endeavoured to be prophets of some sort.

However, Debendranath did not find the road from Rammohan to the *Vedanta* and to the *Vedas* tortuous. And the same was the case with the road from Rammohan to Radhakanta. Rammohan's universal humanism deteriorated into a movement to which only the Hindus had access. A succinct expression of this was given by Rajnarain Bose, a staunch supporter of Debendranath, and successor of Debendranath to the Presidentship of *Adi Brahmo Samaj*, the faction of the *Samaj* led by Devendranath. Here is what he wrote :

But though Brahmoism is a universal religion, it is impossible to communicate a universal form to it. It must wear a particular form in a particular country. In conformity with such views, the *Adi Samaj* has adopted a Hindu form to propagate Theism among Hindus. It has therefore retained many innocent Hindu usages and customs and has adopted a form of divine service containing passages extracted from the Hindu Shastras only; using a book of Theistic texts containing selections from those sacred books only, and a ritual containing as much of the ancient form as could be kept consistently with the dictates of conscience. It leaves matters of social reformation to the judgements and tastes of its individual members. It only lays greater stress upon renunciation of idolatry and purity of conduct than upon social reformation. The National Hindu Theistic Church, according to the principles laid down above, receives only Hindus. It reckons those progressive Brahmos only as its members who call themselves Hindus not only in race but in religion also on the ground that true Hinduism is Theism. If it be asked why should such social distinctions as caste be observed at all, the reply is that the world is not yet prepared for the

practical adoption of the doctrines of levellers and socialists.¹

The young reformers led by Keshub cried "*Brahmoism* is catholic and universal." But they also could not resist the coming trends. The non-rational engulfed them soon. The movement started by Rammohan dissipated itself in the assertion of the veracity of the Vedas, in the supremacy of the Hindu religion, and in syncretistic theological discussions. Rationalistic humanism of Rammohan, his intellectual energy, in short, the spirit of Rammohan lost itself in the rising tide of the non-rational.

The movement initiated by Derozio also had the same fate. Some Derozians joined the *British Indian Association* under the Presidentship of Radhakanta Deb, some just retired from active intellectual life, while others, like Peary Chand Mitra—turned towards spiritualism and searched for ghosts. The euphoria of rationalistic humanism and iconoclastic romanticism was lost in the rising tumult of revivalism. A few isolated individuals and small societies tried to keep the torch of enlightenment burning. Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar is definitely one of them. He and Michael Madhusudan Dutta were among the few individuals who refused to surrender their individuality, their right to differ from the collective. In this Vidyasagar was essentially a non-Hindu Hindu.

The British Indian Association, or at least some of its leading members, sponsored a journal called the *Hindoo Patriot*. Its first editor was Harish Chandra Mukherjee. From 1853 Harischandra poured nationalistic and patriotic writings into the pages of this journal. The *Hindoo Patriot* reflected the contradiction in the English educated Hindus. On the one hand they declared their loyalty to "Hindu civilisation" and on the other hand they thought themselves to be "the chosen instrument of European civilisation in Asia." The paper also evinced its interest "in high family connections and honourable lineage". It wrote against the "mistaken theories of peasant proprietorship" and extolled the necessity of restricting the civil services to men "of

1. *Sastri*, *Ibid.*, p. 189.

high family connections and honourable lineage." At the same time it told the British Government that "in their future intercourse with and legislation for the Natives.... they have a civilised people to deal with." Round this time Bankim came to Calcutta and enrolled himself as a student of the Presidency College. Later he became a member of the *British Indian Association*.

XI THE TWO FACES OF BANKIM : THE RISE OF RELIGIOUS NATIONALISM

From the end of 1856 to the beginning of 1864 Bankim, it appears, did not try his hand at writing anything. In 1864 he started serialising an English novel—*Rajmohan's Wife*—in the *Indian Field*. This novel was a total failure. Possibly, Bankim, like his predecessor, Michael Madhusudan Dutta realised that he could not give full vent to his creative urges through the medium of a foreign language. He started working accordingly in Bengali and his first novel *Durgeshnandini* came out in 1865. After that there was no going back for him. One after another he wrote *Kapalkundala* (1866), *Mrinalini* (1869), *Bishbriksha* (1873), *Indira* (1873), *Jugalangurya* (1874), *Chandrashekhar* (1875), *Rajani* (1877), *Krishnakanter Will* (1878), *Rajsingha* (1882), *Anandamath* (1882), *Debi Chaudhurani* (1884), *Seetaram* (1887), and another small novel—*Radharani* in the volume *Upakatha* published in 1877. In addition to the above novels he published the following books on various subjects: *Lokrahashya* (1874), *Bigyanrahashya* (1875), *Kamlakanter Daptar* (1876), *Bibidha Samalochana* (1877), *Roy Deenabandhu Mitra Bahadurer Jeevani* (1877) Introduction to Deenabandhu's collected works; *Kabita Pustak* (1878), *Samya* (1879), *Prabandha-Pustak* (1879), *Muchiram Gurer Jeebancharit* (1884), *Krishnacharitra* (1886), *Bibidha Prabandha* 1st Part (1887), *Dharmatatwa* 1st Part (1888), *Anushilan* (1888), *Bibidha Prabandha* 2nd Part (1892), *Sahaj Rachana Siksha* (1894), 2nd edition *Sahaj Ingraji Siksha* (1894, 3rd edition), *Sreemadbhagabatgeeta* (1902, posthumous). The novel, *Rajmohan's Wife* was published in book form in 1935.

Bankim was not only a great writer in his own right but also a great editor and trainer of young Bengali litterateurs. He started and edited a Bengali journal called *Bangadarshan*. No student of Bengali literature and language can overstate the yeoman's service rendered by this journal. Bankim was also intimately connected with many other journals like *Prachar*, *Navajiban*, *Bhramar*, etc. He demanded high literary and linguistic standards from his contemporaries and very often showed extra-ordinary powers in recognising literary talents. How Bankim arrived at his prose style is still an enigma. And it will remain an enigma as the mind of a creative writer always escapes categorisation. The irreducible surd of creative genius eludes all analysis. However, it should be pointed out that Bankim, despite his antagonism to Vidyasagar, owes a lot to his prose. Another important factor in the making of Bankim's prose style should not be neglected. He was well-versed in Bengali and English and knew Latin, Greek and Sanskrit though his scholarship in Sanskrit language and literature was not as deep or thorough as that of Vidyasagar. Brajendranath Seal was substantially correct in assessing Bankim from a philosophical point of view.¹ Bankim's philosophical acumen was not of a high calibre. Some writers have tried to picture Bankim as a humanist. Thus Nirad C. Chaudhuri in his *The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian*, London: 1951, writes after quoting a long passage from Bankim's novel *Rajani* which describes Amarnath as a man of all qualities—both mental and physical—that

This passage is significant not because it came to be written by a man who probably had the most powerful intellect and the best intellectual equipment of any Indian in the nineteenth century, and who was the creator of Hindu nationalism and the writer of the *Vande Mataram* song, but because it embodied an ideal which even an ordinary educated Bengali felt compelled to pursue. (p. 188).

1. Cf. Brajendranath Seal *New Essays in Criticism*, Calcutta 1903. pp. 89-95 (See Appendix IV.)

A little before this Chaudhuri writes that

The strength of the humanistic ideal remained unimpaired for about thirty years after the death of Michael Madhusudan Dutt.... (p. 187).

Chaudhuri thinks that humanism in Bengal achieved its zenith in Bankim. He, however, does not tell us how the "creator of Hindu nationalism" can be called a humanist. A few pages after calling Bankim the greatest intellectual of 19th century Bengal, Chaudhuri writes another passage on Bankim.

Bankim Chandra Chatterjee was one of the most assiduous preachers of religious culture; his conception of the perfection of faith was that it was the state in which all the human faculties, intellectual, aesthetic, and active, converged on God; and for the achievement of religious culture and attainment of faith he emphasized the need for strict regime, daily exercise, and regulation of the routine of living.

We are referring to Nirad C. Chaudhuri only to draw our attention to the confusion between romantic revivalism and humanism. Bankim was not a humanist. If we have reasons for calling Rammohan Roy and Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar humanists, as they really were so, we may find some plausibility in applying those reasons to Madhusudan, but Bankim is altogether a different character. Even Chaudhuri seems to have recognised this by implication. For, in a later passage of his book we read :

....Towards the end of the century the Hindu counter-reformation swung to the opposite pole of grotesqueness. From Sanskrit scholasticism it passed to scientific claptrap. Every Hindu custom and every Hindu taboo found its justification in some theory of electricity and magnetism....Even so great an intellectual as Bankim Chandra Chatterji was not immune from this infection. Very discreet indications of his flirtation with the old dame trying to pass off as *mondaine* are occasionally to be found in his writings. But he never resorted to this buffoonery

in his explicit reinterpretation of Hinduism. (Ibid. pp. 203-204).

In his article—*Hindudharma*—Bankim writes that if there is no possibility of reviving *Hindudharma* in all its aspects, there will be left only two ways open to us. First, to reject *Hindudharma* totally, or to accept only its essence, only that part of it without which the society cannot run, without which there shall be no societal progress. Bankim firmly believed that there could not be any society without religion. A society without religion is doomed to destruction ; as a matter of fact, a society without religion just cannot be thought of.

But whatever is not true in *Hindudharma*, whatever is impure, the evil customs prevalent in the country or among the people, whatever is fictitious . . . must be abjured. Whatever is conducive to the real progress of man, whatever is for the physical, mental—all out betterment of the people and the society is *Dharma*. In *Hindudharma* these elements are to be found in greater abundance than in any other religion.

And that is why *Hindudharma* is better than other religion. All religions are no doubt equal ; but *Hindudharma* is more equal than other *Dharmas*. Bankim has taken pains to show how the theory of cosmic consciousness which, according to him, is the root of *Hindudharma*, is in consonance with the findings of modern science. Not only this, he has also shown how the doctrine of three Gods is supported by the findings of modern science. Bankim used his magnificent pen, his acute analytical power, his wealth of learning to rationalise the *Hindudharma*.

In his essay on the *Theory of Gods and Hindudharma* Bankim wrote that those who try to explain religion can be divided into two groups—one group believes in revealed religion while the other group which includes “the Buddhists, Comte, the Brahmos, and the neo-Hindus” do not believe in revealed religion.

They do not accept any book as revealed. If one does not believe in revealed religion, then one must find out a super-natural basis for religion. This super-natural basis of religion is not a figment of

our imagination, devoid of any existence ; even those who refuse to accept religion as a revelation from God, can accept the super-natural basis of religion. The present writer, like other recent commentators of Hinduism, belong to the second category. I do not think any religion has been created by God, or sent by God to this earth. I only maintain that Dharma has a super-natural basis. Yet I maintain that *Hindudharma* is superior to all other religions.

What should be done to find out the origins of religion ? Bankim had an easy formula—do back calculation from the present and you will get the source from where religion has come out. But insofar as the present state of religion among the civilised people is concerned, it will be fruitless to probe into them. They are too sophisticated. We are to go to religions of the “uncivilised people.” In the same article, referred to before, Bankim tells us that

However uncivilised men may be, they understand easily one thing—that body is a different thing from consciousness....Whatever may be the reasons, men do see ghosts. If the uncivilised men see ghosts of dead men, it may occur to them that even after the body is gone, consciousness remains. This belief is the belief in the existence of another world, and this is the beginning of religion....The next stage in religion is to superimpose consciousness on the material world. If any one wants to call it proto-religion, we shall have no objection. It will suffice to remember here that proto-religion is the elementary condition of religion. Just as the first stage of science is consciousness of mistake, the first stage of history is popular legends and anecdotes, so also the first stage of religion is proto-religion....Then there is the third stage of religion. Among the things on which men superimpose consciousness there are some which appear to be very powerful, full of energy or very beautiful....who can be more powerful than a stormthunder, etc ?....They think that there will be all round bliss if they are propitiated....from this arises prayer....There are two kinds of prayer. We pray to

him of whose powers we are afraid or from whose powers we expect good results....But there is something more. We love that which is beautiful. Though we do not derive any direct benefit from the beautiful, yet we adore it....as a matter of fact, this is not prayer, this is simple adoration....Let us translate this concept in the language of the nineteenth century....that which is powerful, is so because of its relationship with something super-natural. The super-natural attraction of Carbon towards Oxygen is the cause of the power of fire. The source of the power of clouds is in the special relationship into which, temperature, water and wind enters. The relationship between different things of the world, is called in science the true....That which is conducive to well-being, nineteenth century has named as The Good. Elegance or beauty has not been given any new name, the beautiful continues to be beautiful, the elegant continues to be elegant; the True, the Good and the Beautiful, these ideas are objects of prayer. This prayer can be of two types. At the time of prayer one can superimpose consciousness on an object which, by itself, has no consciousness; primitive man did exactly the same. This kind of prayer is based on a mistake, hence it is harmful. In the second type of prayer that which has no consciousness is recognised to be so....This is not harmful....In the Vedas both kinds of prayer are mentioned.... There are three stages in the Vedic religion—

(i) First, prayer to the Gods—i.e., superimposition of consciousness on the material object, and its worship.

(ii) Worship of Iswara (eternal consciousness), along with worship of Gods.

(iii) Submersion of worship of Iswar and the Gods in Iswar....Later because of the appearance of the devotional *Sastras*, devotion was attached to the worship of this truth, bliss and consciousness. Only then Hindudharma was completed. This is the most beautiful of all religions, and among the religions

of the world Hinduism is the best. To conceive of the qualityless Brahma in terms of forms, and to worship with devotion the qualitative Iswara is Hinduism in its pristine purity. This is what should be accepted by all men. But it is regrettable that the Hindus have forgotten all this and put only the precepts of the *Dharmasastras* and the local customs in its place. This has led to the downfall of Hinduism and the Hindus.

Bankim was profoundly influenced by Mill's Utilitarianism and Comte's positivism. But his romantic imagination could not accept either Mill or Comte wholly. In 1873, after Mill's death, Bankim wrote an obituary note on him in which he stated, "It is impossible for a common man to decide whose opinion he should accept when great learned men like Mill and Comte differ." But in 1879 Bankim was definitely on the side of Mill despite his hesitations. In his *Samya* he launched a frontal attack on Hinduism, its customs, rituals and traditions, called Mill the greatest exponent of Socialism and paid unequivocal tributes to him. It appears that Bankim did not know that Mill himself recanted his socialist position towards the end of his life. But soon after publishing his essay on *Samya*, Bankim turned away from Socialism. The motivation for this however, is not to be found in his acquaintance with the later writings or letters of Mill. Bankim delved deeper and deeper into Hindu *Dharmasastras* and the *Gita*. Even his subsequent novels bear the stamp of his interest in reviving the Hindus, especially, the Hindus who were supposed to have fallen because of Muslim incursions. In these novels he extolled the character of those Hindus who were supposed to have shown extraordinary character against Muslim depredation.

It is said that Bankim turned practically his entire attention towards Hindu religion because of a difference that he had with Hastie, a Churchman, in the house of the Raja of Sobha Bazar in Calcutta where both of them had gone to attend an obsequial ceremony in 1882. But Bankim himself has written that from his very youth he had the religious quest in him.

However, Bankim accepted Comte's adage: "The General Law of Man's progress, whatever the point of view chosen, consists in this that Man becomes more and more religious", as an apodictic truth. But Bankim had a distinct notion of 'true religion'. He writes:

"If religion is the source of true happiness, the whole human life should be governed by religion. This is the essence of Hindudharma. Other religions do not say so; that is why they are incomplete; only Hindu religion is the most complete religion. Other people believe that religion is concerned with only God and the life beyond. To the Hindu religion encompasses this life, the life beyond, God, man, all living beings, the whole of creation. Is there any other religion so all encompassing, so full of bliss and so pure?"

Bankim's Hindu religion, however, apparently, does not appear to be the religion which follows the *Sastras* literally. He writes in the first page of this *Devatwa O Hindudharma*:

"These people believe that Hindu religion is contained in the Hindu *Sastras*. What is Hindu *Sastra*?.....That which is not true *Hindudharma*, that which is only impure and degraded tradition of the country or of the people, have entered the *Hindudharma* surreptitiously must be discarded now.... If there is untruth in *Manu*, in the *Mahabharata* or in the *Vedas*, they all should be discarded as untruth and anti-religion.... Many do not agree that in the *Vedas* and such other books there can be any untruth..... We are not writing for this group of people. Be that as it may, they have accepted some religion. We are writing for those who have lost their faith in *Hindudharma* and have not embraced any other religion."

Bankim brings his mighty pen and his considerable power of analysis to prove that true Hindu religion is the best religion. But his true Hindu religion, in the long run, appears to be the old one—one which is supposed to have been practised in some mythical past, possibly sometime before the rise of Muslim power in India. That is not all. Bankim takes pains to rationalise any Hindu

custom that he discusses. He opposed any movement for social change which he felt was antithetical to the perpetuation of the *Hindu Brahmanical* religion. His sardonic witticism mocked at all types of social change. One may read his essays on *Bohu Bibaha* (Polygamy), *Gourdas-babajeeer Vikshar Jhuli*, etc., with profit in this connection. Though he, himself was profoundly indebted to the Western writers, he was an adept only in finding fault with them but also in treating them with a contempt which at times makes the readers enjoy the sophistry that he was capable of. He brought the full weight of his Hindu penchant for agglomeration to support and reinstate Hinduism to its lost glory so much so that he even advocated what Vidyasagar called a "double theory of truth." In a controversy with Rabindranath Tagore in 1884 he asseverated that, depending on circumstances, falsehood could be the truth. (cf. His essay: *Adi Brahmo Samaj O "Naba Hindu Sampradaya"* (Old Brahmo Samaj and "the New Hindus".) Bankim, through a remarkable sophistry could extol idolatry, monotheism, polytheism, Vedantic transcendentalism and such other divergent ideas in the same breath. He marshalled his extraordinary pen to show that at the metaphysical level the individual was free as he is pure consciousness; but at the mundane level he does not have and should not have the freedom of the realised and liberated soul. He left us with an unfinished commentary on the *Gita*. In this he followed the agglomerative paradigm of the *Gita* and showed us how the *Gita* is the greatest of all religious books.

According to the *Gita*, the only thing that really matters is steadfast devotion to Krishna. Sins of a devotee of Krishna are not sins as he will attain eternal bliss. The Hindu religion has never been much bothered by the problems of sin and evil. Bankim, however, tried to present Krishna himself as God Almighty. By a kind of a blend between historical and pseudo-historical arguments he determined the date of *Kurukshetra War* as described in the *Mahabharata* as 1430 B.C. After that whatever he found unacceptable to him in the *Mahabharata* or the *Puranas*—books on the basis of which he proved the his-

toricity and the greatness of Krishna—he discarded as interpolations. Sometimes he argued that those verses which did not agree with the general tone—a tone determined by him only—of a book are interpolations. The ‘disagreeable’ things were discarded as interpolations on the basis of his own literary taste. When he found it difficult to have recourse to either of the paths mentioned above, he allegorized the apparently distasteful passages. His natural explanations are quite as much a fairy tale as the *Sastra’s* preternatural ones. His mind was essentially conservative with a strong mixture of a diluted version of Mid-Victorian puritanism and prudery. Here is a specimen of the pseudo-philosophical rigmarole that he was capable of writing :

The true explanation consists in the ever true relations of subjective ideal to the objective Reality. Man is by instinct a poet and an artist. The passionate yearnings of the heart for the Ideal in beauty, in power, and in purity, must find expression in the world of the Real. Hence proceed all poetry and all art. Exactly in the same way the ideal of the divine in man receives a form from him, and the form an image. The existence of idols is as justifiable as that of the tragedy of Hamlet or of that of Prometheus. The religious worship of idols is as much justifiable as the intellectual worship of Hamlet or Prometheus. The homage we owe to the ideal of the Human realized in art is admiration. The homage we owe to the ideal of the Divine realized in idolatry is worship.

(*The Statesman* : October 28, 1882).

The influence of the pseudo-Hegelian Western Orientalists, Anthropologists, Sociologists and eclectic Universalists can be discerned in much of Bankim’s writings. No doubt he found the hard-headed Mill a very disagreeable thinker ; more and more so, as he went to the defence of *Hindudharma* against the incursions of the reformers and the infidels. Bankim had to travel far away from Mill and it seems that what Srishchandra Majumdar reports in his book *Bankim Prasange* is an authentic pic-

ture of Bankim's mind. We read: "Bankim Babu said, 'At some stage, I was profoundly influenced by Mill; now all that is gone.' When the question of his own essay came up he said: '*Samya* is all mistake; it sells very well, but I will not reprint it any more.'"

Bankim himself said in the preface to his *Bangadesher Krishak* (Bengal Peasantry): "Now I have withdrawn the book entitled *Samya*." However, it seems that Bankim had information on the First International and it also appears that through some secondary source he came to know typically Marxian expressions like "Primitive accumulation", etc. In his essays he has literally translated the Marxian expression "Primitive accumulation" into Bengali as "*Adim Sanchyaya*". There is, however, no evidence to show that Bankim was directly conversant with Marxian ideas.

Most certainly, the ideas expressed in *Samya* are antithetical to Hindu tradition; and one cannot be a nationalist by going against the traditions, including the superstitions and idiocyncracies, of his own people. To a nationalist the nation is superior to everything else; liberty, equality and fraternity are not values in themselves; they are for the betterment of the nation; the measure of liberty, equality and fraternity is the good of the nation. Concrete freedom consists in the identity of the system of particular interests with the system of the state. To the nationalist the national state, in contrast with the family and civil society, is not only an external necessity but also an immanent end of the family and the civil society. Hence followed the doctrine: "My nation, right or wrong." Bankim had to establish that his ideas of nationalism were typically Indian (By Indian he always meant Hindu.) and that his country had arrived at the right ideas for the emancipation of the whole of humanity. Indian nationalism, however, had to be different from its counterpart in Europe. It had to use religion as a sort of crutch. Political nationalism came to India when the Indian society was not shaken by any changing technology. The religious fabric of the society, conducive to the then existing mode of production remained, by and large, un-

disturbed. Whatever disturbance was there was felt only by the educated, urbanised gentry who came in some contact with the new system of production in the West and their new ideas. Political nationalism in India is essentially an urban and semi-urban reaction—a reaction of men who easily slipped into populism.

By the time political nationalism became the creed of different European countries, their internecine religious squabbles had lost their sting. Though the ideas of nationalism were being nurtured during the decline of Feudalism in Europe, political nationalism is of comparatively recent origin. By 1745 England had her national anthem: "God save the king." But other European countries had to wait till the French revolution and the Napoleonic wars to have their own national anthems. Napoleonic wars galvanised different groups of people who had felt that they belonged to the same nation into a political nation. These wars, however, brought a new system of production and distribution, new political arrangements and pushed the religious outlook of the people behind the portals of the innumerable churches. The church fathers had to talk about social service, etc. and had to remain content with their services in the church. The religious orthodoxy could not stem the tide of the new systems of production and distribution and consequent upheaval in the social structure. But in India political nationalism in the nineteenth century was the resultant of the impact of the West. No wonder, all the nationalists of India had been people who received Western education. A pundit knowing only the native languages and Sanskrit or a Maulana knowing only his vernacular and Arabic did not become the propounder of nationalistic ideas in India though they were used by the nationalists for their own purpose. Even the concept of India as a political unit is the result of British rule. But this idea of the political unity of India came in an atmosphere where the religious difference between the two major communities—the Hindus and the Muslims—were not ironed out despite the efforts of men like Chaitanya, Kabir, Nanak, Dadu and others. The orthodoxy of the

two communities did not allow the gaps between the two communities to be narrowed. The fact that the Muslims happened to be the rulers of the major part of India before the rise of the British power in India made them feel a little cut off from the British. The Hindus, however, did not have any such feeling as they did not feel deprived by the British conquest. The Maratha paramountcy during the interregnum between the fall of the Mughal empire and the rise of the British in India is remembered by the non-Maharastrian as only a nightmare. Rapprochement between the erstwhile ruling and the ruled communities could not take place easily. Whatever hopes for harmonious relations between the two communities one might have entertained before the rise of nationalism were swept away by its rising tide. Bankim had to establish that not only his country was great but also that his religion was the highest form of religion. To Bankim nationalism was Hindu nationalism.

Like a typical nationalist Bankim did not see any conflict among love for humanity, self-love, love for one's kinsmen, love for one's family members, love for one's wife and children and love for one's own countrymen and country. He held that the Hindu view of life could reconcile all these into a harmonious whole. In his *Dharma Tatwa* he wrote :

As a matter of fact there is no conflict between love for humanity, self-love or love for one's kinsmen and love for one's own country. It is obligatory on me that I should defend myself against an aggressor ; but is it necessary for me not to have any love for humanity and an equal attitude towards everyone. I should not take the beating from everyone without any protest. Its real meaning is that I will not do any harm to any one when everybody is equal to me The thing which I am explaining to you is not European 'Patriotism'. European 'Patriotism' is an abysmal sin ... I pray to God that he may not give to the Indians such patriotism.¹

1. It is interesting to note that Rammohan had also observed that

The apostle of Indian nationalism could see that Indian nationalism must be different from European nationalism. But basically he accepted the European concept of nationalism, at least its aspects of national consolidation, worship of the myth of the nation and its supremacy. He desired that his idea of Hindu nationalism would be accepted by all. He hoped that "India will become the greatest country in the world if she can bring about a synthesis of nationalism and love for all humanity." And he thought that such is the message of the Hindu religion. Nationalism is characterized by attempts at syncretism under the aegis of the concept of the nation.

Bankim spared no pains to prove the glory of the past of India. But that past was not the immediate past to him; it was the pre-Mughal past of India which was full of glory. He was convinced that the Muslims were more

"patriotism never made its way" into India. cf. Raja Rammohan Roy, *Exposition of the Practical Operation of the Judicial and Revenue Systems of India, and on the General Character and Condition of the Native Inhabitants, As Submitted to the Authorities in England With Notes and Illustrations Also A Brief Preliminary Sketch of the Ancient and Modern Boundaries, and of the History of That Country*, London: Smith, Elder and Co., Cornhill 1832. p. x. Bankim did not like European 'Patriotism' because it led to national aggrandisement of the European nations. Indian nationalism, he thought, should be different from European nationalism. But where exactly the difference lay, he was not at all clear. He thought that there can be a synthesis between nationalism and Hinduism which, according to him, implies love for all humanity. It is exactly here that the difference between him and Rammohan becomes more pronounced. Though the tenor of Rammohan's thought was that a monotheistic religion, generally, provided higher moral standards to its votaries than a polytheistic religion yet it is debatable whether or not he intended to make religion the basis of all morality. Bankim also seems to have shared the view that monotheism provides a better basis for morality than polytheism, but he was convinced that religion was the only true and solid basis of morality. By a characteristic circumlocution he proves that there is no contradiction between Hindu monotheism and polytheism, between the Hindu idea of one cosmic consciousness which is the supreme reality and idolatry, between the Hindu idea of one supreme reality and the existence of many Gods. Hence he thinks that Hindu patriotism, Hindu nationalism, has a special message to deliver to the world. Only Hinduism can bring about a synthesis of nationalism and love for all humanity. But how the Hindus will be able to achieve that and keep their social and religious structures in tact is an enigma which eludes all comprehension unless it is assumed that the Hindus will some day be able to bring the world under their sway and thus introduce aggressive 'nationalism' through the back door.

backward than the ancient Hindus. He, however, acknowledged that his own land—Bengal—had no history. "Bengal does not have any history ; whatever there is, cannot be called history ; they are partly novels and partly the biographies of the foreign, infidel, purposeless oppressors. Bengal must have her own history, or else, there is no hope for Bengal." (*Bangladesher Itihash Sambandhe Kayekti Katha—A Few Words on the History of Bengal*). Bankim himself wrote a few articles on the history of Bengal ; but he did not have the acumen for writing history. He tried to establish some chronology of Indian history by taking recourse, at times, to etymology of words, at times quoting people who wrote many, many years after the occurrence of a supposed event. In short, Bankim's exposition of history is casual, desultory, naive and even puerile. However, he was convinced that there was a renaissance in Bengal in the fifteenth century and that renaissance was eclipsed by the Mughals. Hence the Muslim period immediately prior to the advent of the British in India was responsible for India's evil days. The theme of his *Anandmath* is concerned with how a band of devoted Hindus defeated their Muslim rulers. To fight for the country, so the nationalist thinks, it is imperative that the children of the soil must sacrifice everything, including their life, at the altar of the nation. This is the message he tried to convey to his people.

As an apostle of Hindu nationalism he tried to prove that at least in terms of morality, and religion the Hindus of pre-Muslim days in India were much better than any one of their contemporaries ; nay, much better than even Bankim's own contemporaries. For all the miseries of the Hindus only the foreign and infidel marauders were responsible. Bankim used his mighty pen to expose all those who thought of gaining anything from the foreign rulers by trying to please them. Despite his admiration for Bentham and Mill, Bankim believed that conflict between nations is a necessity for progress. In his essay *Jatibairi* (Conflict Between Nations) he wrote :

So long as the conflict between the native and the foreigners, the conquerer and the vanquished conti-

nue to exist, we shall remember our past glory, and there shall be no possibility of a resolution of the conflict between nations.

And we pray with our entire being that so long as we do not become equal to the Englishmen, let our animosity against other nations continue to exist with the same vigour as it is found to-day. So long as conflict between nations remains, competition between them will continue. It is partially because of the sense of conflict and competition that we are trying to be the equals of the Englishmen in certain spheres. The extent to which we shall try to be the equals of the Englishmen if we are humiliated by them, if we are ridiculed by them will be more potent than the means that we will adopt if the Englishmen pamper us as there will, then, be no bitter challenge. One can compete only with one's adversary ; one does not enter into competition with those who are on one's own side. Superior friends protect laziness. We are lucky that we have national conflict with the Englishmen.

Bankim wrote this in 1873. Soon after in his *Kamala-kanter Daftar* (Archives of Kamalakanta) he elaborated the same theme.

We have known, this is our motherland—this idol of clay—decorated with precious jewels—is now immersed in bad times. Her ten hands are bedecked with jewels—they point to ten different directions—on them we see different weapons ; under her feet the enemy is lying prostrate, the brave lion is busy destroying the enemy ; But we will not see this aspect of the Goddess now—we will not see it today, we will not see it tomorrow, we will not see it till the end of our evil days. But one day we will see her.... Come my brothers, let us jump into the torrent of evil days. Come, let us carry on our head this idol and bring her back to our home.

It seems that soon after writing the above, he versified the ideas in his song *Bandemataram*. Most probably he wrote this song sometime in 1875. But he included this song

in *Anandamath* published in 1882. The role of this novel and the song in the rise of Indian nationalism can hardly be over-rated. In the three novels—*Anandamath*, *Debi Choudhurani* and *Sitaram* Bankim extolled the virtues of nationalistic feelings and patriotism. But that is not all. He also showed that devotion—total devotion to the cause of the nation—had to be cultivated blindly with a total commitment to the cause of the nation. No wonder Aurobindo, the theoretician of Indian nationalism, found Bankim almost an incarnation of Lord Vishnu. In one of his articles on Bankim published in *Indu Prakash* in the year 1894 Aurobindo wrote :

And when posterity comes to crown with her praise the makers of India, she will place her most splendid laurels not on the sweating temples of a place-hunting politician nor on the narrow forehead of a noisy social reformer but on the serene brow of that gracious Bengali (Bankim) who never clamoured for place or power, but did his work in silence for love of his work, even as nature does, and, just because he had no aim but to give out the best that was in him, was able to create a language, a literature and a nation.

Following Bankim, Aurobindo identified India with the Mother Goddess. He wrote :

What is nation ? What is our mother country ? It is not a piece of earth, nor a figure of speech, nor a fiction of the mind. It is a mighty *Shakti*, composed of all the *Shaktis* of all the millions of units that make up the nation. Just as *Bhawani Mahisha Mardini* sprang into being from the *Shaktis* of all the millions of gods assembled in one mass of force and welded into unity, *The Shakti*, we call in India, *Bhawani Bharati*, is the living unity of the *Shaktis* of three hundred million people....” (*Bhawani Mandir* published in Sri Aurobinda Mandir Annual: Jayanti Number 15, 15th August, 1956).

Aurobindo stated Bankim's ideas more explicitly. Like Bankim he combined the cult of Mother worship with the

message of the Gita and wrote in the typical fashion of Bankim :

What is Nationalism? Nationalism is not a mere political programme, nationalism is a religion that has come from God: Nationalism is a creed which you shall have to liveIf you are going to be a nationalist, if you are going to assent to the religion of nationalism, you must do it in the religious spirit. You must remember that you are the instrument of God.

Such a fervent call for national freedom, such ornate exuberance for the cause of the nation, such populist avoidance of any concrete plan and programme both for the achievement and the fulfilment of national freedom as Bankim and Aurobindo were capable of writing, inspired the Hindu nationalists to raise their voice simultaneously against the British Raj and in favour of a reinstatement of the glory that was Hindu India.

Bankim provided the theoretical foundation of Indian nationalism though one might think that he provided an "apology for the loyal acceptance of British rule...." In this connection it will be worth its while to quote from R. C. Dutt's article on Bankim in the 11th edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* :

Of all his (Bankim's) work, however, by far the most important from its astonishing political consequences was the *Anandamath* which was published in 1882, about the time of the agitation arising out of the Ilbert Bill. The story deals with the Sannyasi (i.e., hermit) rebellion of 1772 near Purnea, Tirhut and Dinapur, and its culminating episode is a crushing victory won by the rebels over the united British and Mussalman forces, a success which was not, however, followed up, owing to the advice of a mysterious 'physician' who, speaking as a divinely-inspired prophet, advises Satyananda, the leader of 'the Children of the Mother', to abandon further resistance, since a temporary submission to the British rule is a necessity; for Hinduism has become too speculative and unpractical, and the mission of the English

in India is to teach Hindus how to reconcile theory and speculation with the facts of science. The general moral of the *Anandamath*, then, is that British rule and the British education are to be accepted as the only alternative to Mussulman oppression, a moral which Bankim Chandra developed also in his *Dharmatattwa*, an elaborate religious treatise in which he explained his views as to the changes necessary in the moral and religious condition of his fellow-countrymen before they could hope to compete on equal terms with the British and Mahomedans. But though the *Anandamath* is in form an apology for the loyal acceptance of British rule, it is none the less inspired by the ideal of the restoration, sooner or later, of a Hindu Kingdom in India. This is especially evident in the occasional verses in the book, of which the *Bande Mataram*, is the most famous.

No doubt Aurobindo, the brain behind making the Indian National Congress a fighting organisation, found in Bankim and the song *Bandemataram* the harbinger of a new India—an India ruled by the nationalists. He wrote :

The new intellectual idea of the motherland is not in itself a great driving force ; the mere recognition of the desirability of freedom is not an inspiring force ; ... It is not till the motherland reveals herself to the eye of the mind as something more than a stretch of earth or a mass of individuals, it is not till she takes shape as great divine and Maternal Power in a form of beauty that can dominate the mind and seize the heart that these petty fears and hopes vanish in the all-absorbing passion for mother and her service, and patriotism that works miracles and saves doomed nations is born. To some men it is given to have that vision and reveal it to others. It was thirty two years ago that Bankim wrote his great song ... The Mantra had been given and in a single day a whole people had been converted to the religion of patriotism. The Mother had revealed herself ... A great nation which has had that

vision can never again be placed under the feet of the conqueror.

In the same article published on the 16th of April, 1907 Aurobindo wrote :

The earlier Bankim was only a poet and stylist—the later Bankim was a seer and nation-builder.

Bankim provided the sheet-anchor of Hindu nationalism. Members of the English educated section of the Hindus came from the families of office clerks, factory supervisors, small-time lawyers and professionals, dilettante small landholders who lived on the labour of others and with their strong romantic dispositions soon swelled the ranks of the Hindu nationalists. They found in Bankim an apostle, so much so, that they adopted *Bandemataram* both as a national song and a national slogan. They struggled against British rule shouting the slogan *Bandemataram* and also participated in communal riots against the Muslims shouting the same slogan. The Hindus being the majority community in India soon could take the pose that their demands constituted the national demand though a small number of Muslims were drawn into the vortex of the national movement mainly led by the Hindus. The explanation of a small number of Muslims joining the main current of Indian nationalism should be sought elsewhere. But it cannot be denied that the course of the main current of the nationalist movement in India was plotted by Bankim and ultimately, as a logical conclusion of this, the Indian sub-continent had to be partitioned into two countries. Mahatma Gandhi “fell a victim to the very cult that he preached ... The lesson of the martyrdom of the Mahatma is that the nobler core of his message could not be reconciled with the intolerant cult of nationalism.”¹ One may even say that such development were embedded in the very socio-political complex of India.

Attempts to bring about a reconciliation between the two major religious groups in India were made even in earlier days in an atmosphere where

..... there was a lamentable decadence of religious life and ideals The tyranny of an alien rule

1. cf. M. N. Roy, *Independent India*, XII-6/7, p. 67.

was aggravated by the greater social tyranny of dominant Brahmanism with its protective, but despotic, spirit. Minute rules and restrictions of an unchanging and stringent code of religious and social duties were prescribed...."¹

But the missions of Chaitanya Nanak, Kabir, Dadu and others shipwrecked against the solid irrationality of the Hindu orthodoxy. The individual's freedom to choose his own ways of living or his own ways of acting, or his own ways of worshipping God were engulfed in the Hindu tradition of dual, and unrelated existence of the individual in two spheres, the transcendental and the empirical. The same was the fate of the movements started by Rammohan. Rammohan's dream gave way to the rising tide of nationalism. He was almost apotheosized and made a founder of a new religious cult within the Hindu fold. Brahmos found a plea for participating in the nationalist movement. Nationalism in India was fostered in an atmosphere surcharged with religious, social, economic and political differences between the two religious communities—the Hindus and the Muslims.

Initially, the Muslims felt a little sullen against the British as they believed that they were cheated by the British of their rightful place. The Muslims composed the major ruling power in India before the rise of the British. However, the rich gentry of the Muslim community in India refused to march with the times and soon became symbols of decadence. There was hardly any appreciable change in the system of production in the Muslim period. The majority of the Muslims were converts from the poorer sections of the Hindus. In order to make the new converts more entrenched in Islam, the Muslim religious orthodoxy made beef-eating almost an Islamic ritual. The schism between the two communities—the Hindus, the majority of whom consider beef-eating as the worst possible sin and the Muslims who thought that they would be able to establish their distinctiveness by eating beef—was further fortified and strengthened by the failure of

1. Sushil Kumar De, *Early History of the Vishnava Faith And Movement in Bengal*, 2nd edition, p. 28.

the backward-looking Muslim and Hindu gentry. The two communities found their days of glory in two different dreams. Hindu nationalism and Muslim nationalism in India grew as distinct forces. Bankim became the apostle of Hindu nationalism with the usual and occasional slogan of the nationalists: "All nations are equal; all religions are equal, etc." That Bankim was later ashamed of what he wrote in his essay *Samya* is not surprising. Bankim wanted to lead the Hindus, nay, the entire humanity to Canaan. But his Canaan was a Hindu Canaan.

It is likely that after publishing the essay *Samya* he got appalled at the consequences that might have followed if the people took it seriously. In the preface to *Samya* he wrote:

The first, second and fifth chapters of this essay consist of the essay entitled *Samya* published in *Bangadarshan*. The third and fourth chapter have been taken from the essay *Bangladesher Krishak* published in the same journal. It is not a fact that the depiction of the life of the peasantry has been done to give an instance of prevalent social disparities. This has been shown as an outcome of ancient caste system. The reader should bear this in his mind.

The philosophy of equality is not a new thesis. But I have not discussed it in the way that Europeans do. I have only written my broad understanding of the philosophy of equality. So I hope no one will get disgusted if they find any difference between what I have said and what is stated in the European political science. Moreover, I have written this for the common man of this country. I will not be sorry if the well-educated does not find anything worth its while in this essay. I shall be grateful if these ideas germinate in the minds of the unsophisticated readers.

What possibly made Bankim wary was his criticism of the Hindu orthodoxy in the *Samya*. He called them hucksters of wisdom and eloquence and animals of self-glorification. In this essay he could see that the Hindus

had spent their creative energy and were repetitive and derivative. The Hindu tradition, as Bankim found it in this essay, was arid, decadent, and totally bankrupt in new ideas. Later on Bankim must have felt aghast at the logical conclusion of the ideas contained in the *Samya*. That is possibly the reason why he revoked it.

The *Socialism* which Bankim advocated was the socialism of the First International and Mill. Bankim, however, could not see the possibility of *Socialism* as a collectivistic force. If he could see this possibility, he possibly, would have become the philosopher of "Hindu *Socialism*." After all *Socialism* is a doctrine of emancipation aiming at abolition of all types of slavery in an industrial and semi-industrial society, and it is also a doctrine of organisation which, to protect the freedom of the weak against the strong, needs a restored and strengthened power. Emancipation or organization—provides a veritable Hobson's choice before those who accept *Socialism* as their creed. One cannot emancipate others in this world without organisation. The socialists lose their original inspiration for the emancipation of the down-trodden and get enmeshed in the organisation part of their programme for emancipation. The modern structure of the State puts almost unlimited powers at the disposal of those who run it. This becomes especially so when the State is in the hands of a band of determined people who are eager either to stop its working or to bend it to their will. The road from *Socialism* to nationalism is not a tortuous one. "... socialists (and they are not only the hole—and-corner nihilists) are conscious Jesuits and liars who do not admit that their ideal is the ideal of coercion of the human conscience and reduction of mankind to the level of cattle."¹

Bankim, however, did not see these possibilities in *Socialism* because of his preoccupation with Hinduism. He concentrated only on the iconoclastic aspects of *Socialism* and was dismayed at the spectre of *Socialism*. He thought that his brand of nationalism was not in consonance with *Socialism*. Possibly he was right. *Socialism* may be

1. Letter quoted by David Magarshak in his Introduction to *The Brothers Karamazov*.

an ally of nationalism ; but it is debatable as to whether or not it can be an ally of nationalism oriented round Hinduism which permits people to live in many different worlds without ever feeling the stress of such a life. Nay, only the Hindu can talk, in the same breathe, about socialism, nationalism, Hinduism, devotion to the innumerable living and non-living Gods, equality of all human beings and the caste system and what not. He can interpret 'secularism' not as meaning equal unconcern of the state about all religious sects, cults and groups but as equal encouragement by the state to all religions, leading only to confusion, mutual lampooning and back-scratching. Contradictions, conflicting norms of behaviour, confusions are parts of the Hindu ethos. The Hindu ethos accommodates all these without feeling any stress and tribulation. For, has not Manu, the great seer of the ceaseless and eternal movement of cyclical time said that conflicting elements can both be taken as the law ? The Hindu unconcern toward a resolution of confusions, contradictions, etc., is often rationalised by its apologists as tolerance.

Bankim could not reconcile himself to *Socialism* and Hindu nationalism held together. The chief motivation of the *Socialism* about which he wrote in his *Samya* is essentially humanistic, based on a recognition of the dignity of the human person, an issue on which the Hindu view of life is apathetic. He, however, had a vision of a mighty nation which would revive and propagate the Hindu ideals. While reviewing Rajnarain Bose's *Hindu Dharmer Sresthata* (Supremacy of the Hindu Dharma), he quoted Milton with seeming approval. Milton saw the vision of a mighty English nation.

Me thinks I see in my mind a noble and puissant nation rousing herself like a strong man after sleep and shaking her invincible looks ; methinks I see her as an eagle mewing her mighty youth and kindling her undazzled eyes at the full mid-day heaven. After quoting Milton, Bankim continued : "I can also say similar things about the Hindu nation." He gave a Bengali version of Milton's words and fervently called every Hindu to jump into the struggle for the emancipation,

resuscitation, and galvanisation of all Hindus into a Hindu nation.

Bankim discerned that there was a simple, uncritical fundamentalist faith for the uneducated Hindu masses enshrined in their countless rituals and another more philosophical and sophisticated doctrine for the leaders of Hinduism and tried to demonstrate that there was a hidden allegorical meaning behind the rituals and religious books of the Hindus which were not overtly theoretical and lend their support to his brand of Hindu nationalism. Insofar as the overtly theoretical texts of the Hindus were concerned, he interpreted them to suit his purpose. However, at the highest level of allegorical meaning, in Bankim's view, was to be found a philosophical and theological doctrine which was the same as the teaching of the *Gita* as interpreted by him. It is significant that all the Hindu leaders of nationalism from Bankim, Aurobindo, Tilak to Gandhi were enamoured of the *Gita*. They again and again referred to the *Gita* and wrote commentaries on it; but they hardly mentioned the *Upanishadas*. In contradistinction to this the leaders of thought in modern India who belong to the tradition set up by Ram-mohan never took the *Gita* seriously. They talked more of the *Upanishadas*. The *Upanishadas*, whatever their interpretation may be, can hardly provide any fillip to nationalistic extravaganza. In contradistinction to this, the *Gita* is amenable to such interpretation as to provide motivation for supreme sacrifice at the altar of the nation. Bankim, Aurobindo and Tilak provided the Hindus with such interpretations. Bankim's interpretation of Hindu religion and the *Gita* as containing historical, moral and philosophical doctrines of the highest and best order fitted in very well with the double-faith agglomerative attitude of the Hindus. It was not necessary for the Hindu nationalist intellectuals to be embarrassed by decidedly non-human, individualistic aspects of Hindu rituals and traditions. They could either be denied as tendentious propaganda of the imperialist foreigners or explained away by allegory. Although another school of Hindu orthodoxy advocated a more literal approach to the Hindu scriptures, the method

of heavy allegorising of the Hindu religious texts conformed much better to the aspirations of the Western educated advocates of Hinduism who tried to present before the public a type of neo-Hinduism very much congenial to the development of Hindu zealotry.

Bankim, in his *Dharmatattwa*, wrote that we should learn the material sciences like, Mathematics, Astronomy, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Sociology, etc., from the West; for knowing God we should look into the *Sastras* of the Hindus. "But the most valued source of spiritual knowledge is the *Gita*." Bankim believed in the cyclical theory of history implied in the *Gita*. He did not see that such a theory of history undermines man's simple faith and drags him from the straight road compelling him to walk on the wheel. He was least bothered by the origins of the human race and the mortal condition of man, nor was he disturbed by the problem how all this will be brought to fulfilment. He asked his countrymen to swallow the canard that the same revolution of time and temporal things are repeated and are destined to be repeated through countless ages of the future.

It should be mentioned here that before the publication of the *Samya* Bankim was intensely interested in the positive sciences developed in the Western countries and was convinced that that was something which his countrymen must learn from the West. He wrote a number of essays in Bengali on subjects like, *Great Solar Eruption*, *Multitudes of Stars*, *Dust*, *Aerostation*, *The Universe in Motion*, *Antiquity of Man*, *Protoplasm*, *Curiosities of Quantity and Measure* and *The Moon*. In these essays, according to his own statement, he followed the ideas of Huxley, Tyndall, Proctor, and others. These essays were published in a book form in the year 1875. His interest in the positive sciences soon led him to the social sciences as developed in the Western countries and *Samya* came out in 1879. But intelligence and scruple could not compete with naivete and the desire to accept the spiritual and the metaphysical as demonstrable facts. Even when Bankim was writing his essays on scientific topics, he tried to convince his readers that the ancient Indians were very ad-

vanced in the positive sciences. A measure of this belief can be found in his essay on the *Indian Association of Science* written in 1873. He was sure that the Europeans had established their hegemony on this earth because of development of the sciences. But he laments that though the ancient Indians were much more advanced in the sciences than the Europeans, they neglected the sciences and hence followed the downfall of the Indians. He, however, could not see that the difference between the two developments—the development of science in India and the development of science in Europe—lay in the approach that the two had towards the empirical world of facts. In science there are conceptual confusion and methods of proof; whereas in ancient India there were conceptual confusion and some experimental methods.

XII HINDUS AND MUSLIMS

That Bankim withdrew his essay *Samya* is no mere accident. It was an act of deliberate and well-calculated choice. His nationalism is directly linked with the different intellectual, social and political movements of the 19th Century. *Samya* represents his involvement with the intellectual and social movements started by Rammohan and his deep study of Western authors, especially, of Mill. The socialism which Bankim advocated in his essay *Samya* was inspired, mainly, by his study of Mill. But neither Rammohan's intellectual fibre nor Mill's approach to social problems could provide sustenance to Bankim's adulation of Hinduism and Hindu nationalism. The relation between romantic imagination and nationalism is very intimate. In a sense, Bankim's nationalism cannot be called a purely political nationalism as it is found in the West. Even in the West political nationalism is comparatively a recent phenomenon—mainly a product of the French Revolution and Napoleonic wars.

In a country of many religions with their different social and religious customs and rituals, in a country where Feudalism in the Continental or the British sense of the term never developed, in a country where the roots of

democracy never took to the soil, in a country whose major religion—Hinduism—is polymorphous and agglomerative, in a country where casuistry, axiology and ethics were never clearly demarcated, in a country whose economy was in moribund state, Bankim had to draw the attention of his people to a type of nationalism unknown to the West. For the purpose of rousing the *national ego* it was necessary to put the entire blame for the miseries of the Indians on someone. One of the worse evil effects of foreign domination is that it saps out the manhood of the subjugated people. Bankim did not raise his voice against his contemporary British rulers. He was primarily concerned with the downfall of the Hindus. Nationalists usually censure not their own nationals but some alien people for the miseries of their people. Contemporary folk-lore of the Hindus about the Muslims and their rule over the country provided Bankim the necessary objects on which he could put the entire responsibility for the unhappiness of his people. Bankim could not hold the British rule responsible for the miseries of his people as he believed that the British had come to India as a sort of saviour from Muslim misrule. He thought that British rule would provide opportunities to his people to consolidate and assert themselves. The main planks of Bankim's nationalism are simultaneous hatred of the immediate past, disenchantment with the present, glorification of a remoter past and hope for a glorious future of the Hindus. Nationalism for Bankim was not a creed for ousting the British rulers from India; it was a plea for better conditions of living for his people within the periphery of Hinduism and under the protective umbrella provided by the British rule of law. But to foster the nationalism of his own liking, to give confidence to the Hindus that the eternal Hindu Dharma is the best possible socio-cultural and religious arrangement based on essential truth, he had to invent a whippingtop. He had not to use much innovative power for this. The Hindu folk-lore about Muslims—*yavanas*—and their rule over India strengthened by Western scholarship came as a very handy tool for this purpose.

When the Muslim powers ruled supreme over India,

especially over North India, we hardly find any Hindu literati writing in derogatory terms about them. Instead there were meaningful movements started by the minor mystics of India seeking a rapprochement between different religions, especially between Islam and Hinduism. In some of them, however, we can discern a subtle subterfuge camouflaging their bigotry. Subsequently, many of these minor mystics were deified, mostly by different sections of the Hindu community, and made seers or prophets of different cults within the agglomerative Hindu fold. Islam is antithetical to the deification of the human individual as well as to the accommodation of cults within its fold. A monotheistic and egalitarian religion cannot do otherwise. Moreover, among other things, the strong taboo against beef eating among the overwhelming number of Hindus stood in the way of the realisation of the grand dreams of the minor mystics.

However, though written records of the adverse attitude of the Hindus towards Islam and the Muslim rulers are conspicuous by their absence during the period of Muslim hegemony over India yet it may not be too rash to surmise that the Hindu Pundits and the Hindu society must have tried to protect themselves against the danger posed by Islam. Chaitanya and Raghunandan in the first half of the 16th. Century started diametrically opposing movements. Chaitanya's message was cosmopolitan and based on love for all. But Raghunandan¹ desired to close the ranks of the Hindus with Rhadamanthine inflexibility. Chaitanya's message subsequently deteriorated into a set of religious beliefs held by some cults within the Hindu fold. On the whole, Raghunandan's endeavours proved to be more abiding. The rhabdomancy of Raghunandan made the Hindu society more parochial and closed. The Hindus tried to protect their religion against the incursions of monotheistic and egalitarian Islam.

Among other reasons for Raghunandan's success, it is likely that the Islam which came to India contributed much

1. Raghunandan and Chaitanya were students of the logician Raghunath Siromoni (Sarvabhaum). Raghunandan is the author of the encyclopaedic *Tattva* books on Hindu law and is recognised as an authority on the same.

to the perpetuation of the decadence that there already was in India. Islam came to India in a big way after it had exhausted itself outside as a major cultural force. India provided a meeting ground for decadent Islam and the decadent Hindus. But the magnificent system of administration introduced by the Muslim rulers, especially by the Mughals, provided succour to the Indian people. Despite this the decadence in the Indian society continued. The decadent period of the Hindus and the subsequent period under Muslim rule are characterised by almost a total absence of technological and scientific innovativeness. It is significant that as late as the late 17th. Century though Aurangzeb procured a telescope for himself to supervise the movements of his army in the battle field, he could not think of manufacturing the same in India and provide telescopes to the officers of his army. The Christian missionaries brought printed books on their religion and other subjects to India. Later they started printing presses in India. But Indians continued to work with hand-written copies of their books for a long time. Neither the rulers nor the laity even thought of copying the advanced technological and scientific innovations of the West. The whole Muslim period and the period immediately prior to that are barren in this respect. The only thing of value the Muslim period produced was lyricism. Its literature is lyrical; its architecture is lyrical; its religious poetry is lyrical, its art is lyrical; even its music is mostly lyrical. A society whose major tenor is characterised by lyricism tends to be unproductive, especially in the field of scientific and technological innovations. As a result, the whole country was in a moribund state when the mighty Mughal empire disintegrated and its grand administrative structure collapsed. Its economy collapsed; in technical and scientific innovations it lagged far behind the West. Even the Islamic genius for writing history, a thing unknown to the Hindus, was lost in the torpor of decadence. The last of the mighty Mughals, Aurangzeb, did not have even a chronicler to write the accounts of his times. The so-called tyrannical rule of Aurangzeb became almost a folk-lore with many

a historian not only of the 18th. Century but also of the 19th. and 20th. Centuries.

As soon as the Muslim power in India began to wane in the 18th. Century, quite a few Hindus started writing in open derogatory terms about them. What possibly was the prerogative of the Hindu Pundits became almost an obsessive preoccupation with a number of Hindu literati. Bharatchandra, the greatest among them in Bengal, depicted the depredations of the *Bargis* (Maratha marauders) in Bengal in his *Annadamangal*; but provided apologetics for the same by pointing out that it was an act of divine dispensation to punish the sinning Muslims. Only in Gangaram's *Maharashtra Puran* do we find some historical account and understanding of the Muslim rule. But even at that time the Hindus did not discover the glory that was India.

With the advent of the Western powers in India, the historical interest of the West was, at first, limited to the immediate past—the Muslim period, especially to the reign of Aurangzeb and the downfall of the Mughal empire. Unhistorical and semi-historical legends were manufactured about this period. Thanks to the work done by the previous historians, Islamic history was known to the Western scholars. But Islam in India was a new phenomena to them. Moreover, the West, especially those countries of the West which embarked on establishing their hegemony over non-western countries tried to find out some justification for their activities by convincing themselves that the previous rulers of the non-Western countries did not deserve to be rulers and that they were there not only to enhance their own economic and political interests but also to distribute what they believed to be Christian piety. Initially, for the purpose of their own economic and political interests they started compiling reports on the land and the people over whom they endeavoured to establish their hegemony. The Christian missionaries followed the European merchants. To some of them monotheistic and egalitarian Islam was a challenge to monotheistic Christianity. The infidels in India had to be rescued not only from the inferno of polytheistic Hinduism but also from the mistaken monotheism of Islam. Muslim rule in India

was by definition a bad rule. Even so, the early Christian missionaries and their successors, at least some of them, did yeoman's service to the Indian people.

Alexander Dow (died in 1779) was, however, among the first of those who had a critical attitude towards the doings of the East India Company and deep admiration for the 'enlightened despotism' of the Mughals. In his eyes the Europeans were necessarily a band of superior men and were the legitimate successors to the splendid imperial structure of the Mughals. Jonathan Scott tried to diagnose the cause of the downfall of the mighty Mughal empire. He found that Aurangzeb's "zeal for the Muhammedan religion—led him to deprive the Hindu prince of those indulgences which his less bigoted ancestors had allowed." Gibbon's approach towards Islam affected a whole generation of Western historians, particularly of those who were interested in the history of Muslim rule in India. They, however, hardly took any note of Gibbon's equally critical attitude towards Christianity. Be that as it may; the Western orientalists soon came into the field and discovered the glory that was India in the remote past, prior to the rise of Muslim powers in India. William Jones attributed the downfall of the great ancient civilisation of the Hindus to the Muslim conquest.

Even Rammohan, who was deeply conversant with Islamic theology and religion through original sources, did not have much respect for the Muslim rulers, especially for the rulers immediately before his times. He described them as "those tyrants". In his appeal to the King-in-Council against the press regulations, Rammohan after drawing a balance sheet of achievements and drawbacks of Muslim rule against which he narrates the 'beneficial effects of the British rule, writes, *inter-alia*:

Your majesty's faithful subjects were consoled by the more secure enjoyment of those civil and religious rights which had been so often violated by the rapacity and intolerance of the Mussalmans; and notwithstanding the loss of political rank and power they considered themselves much happier in the en-

joyment of civil and religious liberty than were their ancestors.

We also read the following :

The natives of Bengal remained faithful to the existing Government (Muslim), although their property was often plundered, their religion insulted, and their blood wantonly shed.

And further :

Mussalmans introduced their tyrannical government, destroying temples, universities and all other sacred and literary establishments.

But Rammohan also appreciated certain aspects of the Muslim rule. For, he writes :

Your Majesty is aware that under their former Muhammedan rulers, the natives of this country enjoyed every political privilege in common with the Mussalmans, being eligible to the highest offices in the state, entrusted with the command of armies and the government of provinces and often chosen as advisers to their prince without disqualification or degrading distinction on account of their religion....

Under the British rule, the natives of India have entirely lost their political consequence.

Rammohan was influenced by contemporary folk-lore and historiography. There were the natives of India and there were the Musalmans ; the tyrannical Musalmans unleashed a rule of plunder and shed blood wantonly, etc. Rammohan had to depend on the historiography available to him. Moreover, the forward-looking Rammohan was sore with the decadence in his society. He knew that prior to the establishment of British rule in India, the country was sliding down in the scale of civilisation. The adage of A. N. Whitehead that barbarism has always defeated culture may not be applicable to the British hegemony over India. However, Rammohan is the first Indian to have realised that because of British conquest there was loss of "political consequence" of the natives of India. He did not think that they suffered a similar loss under the Muslim rulers.

Moreover, Rammohan held high opinion about the integrity of the Muslim character. He said :

Amongst the Mohammedan lawyers I have met with some honest men. The Hindu lawyers are in general not well spoken of, and they do not enjoy much of the confidence of the people.

.... some of the Muftis (Mussulman law assessors) are men of such high honour and integrity, that may be entrusted with the power of a jury with perfect safety

The Mohammedans are more active and capable of exertion than the Hindus, but the latter are also generally patient of labour, and diligent in their employments, and those of Upper Provinces not inferior to the Mohammedans themselves in industry.¹

Rammohan's assessment of the Muslim rulers of India was based on the data available to him. But he had the catholicity to see that Islam, by definition, was not an inferior religion to Hinduism. On the contrary, he was convinced that the Hindus had become decadent.

On the Hindus he had the following to say :

Living constantly amongst the Hindus of different sects and professions, I have had ample opportunity of observing the superstitious peculiarities into which they have been thrown by their self-interested guides; who in defiance of the law, as well as of common sense, have succeeded but too well in conducting them to the temple of idolatry; and while they hid from their view the true substance of morality have infused into their simple hearts a weak attachment for its mere show....the chief part of Hinduism, I am sorry to say, is made to consist in the adoption of a peculiar mode of diet; the least aberration from which (even though the conduct of the offender may in other respects be pure and blameless) is not only visited with the severest censure, but actually punished by exclusion from the society of his family and friends. In a word, he

1. Rammohan Roy, *Exposition of the Practical Operation of the Judicial System of India* . . . (London, 1832) pp. 11, 39 and 108.

is doomed to undergo what is commonly called loss of caste.

On the contrary the rigid observance of this grand article of Hindu faith is considered in so high a light, as to compensate for every moral defect. Even the most atrocious crimes weigh little or nothing in the balance against the supposed guilt of its violation.

Murder, theft, or perjury, though brought home to the party by a judicial sentence, so far from inducing loss of caste, is visited in their society with no peculiar mark of infamy or disgrace.

A trifling present to the Brahmin commonly called Prayaschit, with the performance of a few idle ceremonies, is held a sufficient atonement for all those crimes; and the delinquent is at once freed from all temporal inconvenience, as well as all dread of future retribution.

My reflections upon those solemn truths have been most painful for many years. I have never ceased to contemplate with the strongest feelings of regret, the obstinate adherence of my countrymen to their fatal system or idolatry, inducing, for the sake of propitiating their supposed deities the violation of every humane and social feeling; and this in various instances, but more especially in the dreadful acts of self-destruction, and the immolation of the nearest relation, under the delusion of conforming to sacred religious rites.

I have never ceased, I repeat, to contemplate these practices with the strongest feelings of regret, and to view in them the moral debasement of a race, who I cannot help thinking are capable of better things; whose susceptibility, patience, and mildness of character, render them worthy of a better destiny.¹

Rammohan was concerned with the actual effects of Hinduism on the human mind and character. The Hindu

1. Rammohan Ray, *Ishopanishad of the Yajur Veda* Calcutta, 1816, Introduction pp. 11-12.

lived a circumscribed life in a static society, devoid of a sense of history, in which moral imperatives were simply given in the *Sastras*, their numberless ramifications and the customs of the people. In such a society the question of experimentation did not arise. The English knowing Hindu orthodoxy advocated a deliberate self-surrender to the customs. They got support from a section of the Western orientalist who spread the canard that the Hindu civilisation, in contradistinction to the Western civilisation, which is material, is spiritual. But they did not recognise that to the Hindu the spiritual scarcely has any moral implication. By spiritual he understands mostly the mental; the power of the mind over matter; the magician controlling the elements. The spiritual life of the Hindu is not a personal adventure for the achievement of values; it is only a quest for *Asta Siddhi* (Eight preternatural powers to control the material world). But he recognises that beyond *Asta Siddhi*, there is another stage which the human being can achieve; there his individual self is submerged in the cosmic self or consciousness—a 'stage' which is not a stage, a 'stage' which is valuationally neutral. Ram-mohan endeavoured to introduce values into the value-neutral ethos of the Hindu. He did not remain content only with his revolt against Hindu customs, manners and traditions; he also tried to bring a rapprochement between the two major religious communities of India. And this he did not seek only at the metaphysical level by spreading the legend that all religions have the same basic message to give. He took up concrete issues affecting both the communities. He is possibly the first Indian in the 19th Century to have tried joint efforts of Hindus and Muslims against discriminatory practices.

On the 5th of May, 1826 the British Parliament passed the Jury Bill introduced by Wyne, the President of the Board of Control. According to this, the Indo-Britons and the natives were for the first time made eligible to sit on juries in criminal cases before the Supreme Courts. But while the Indo-Britons were given the right and privilege to sit on both the Grand and Petty Juries, as well as on the trial of criminals belonging to both Christian and other

communities, the non-Christian natives were allowed to sit on the Petty Juries alone, and that too not on trials of Christians.

The Act evoked different reactions in different parts of the country. Thus in Madras, a largely attended meeting held on November 25, 1826 decided that the Act was not in consonance with habits, institutions, religious mores and inclinations of the natives of India.¹

Ninety-five Hindus, Parsees and Mohamedans from Bombay petitioned the House of Commons on the Act on June 5, 1829.² In this petition, they, *inter alia* said :

Your Honourable House will not believe that a population of upwards of sixty millions does not contain within itself, talent, as assiduity, and integrity, to justify their being largely admitted into the execution of judicial, financial, and territorial offices.

But the reaction in Calcutta under the leadership of Rammohan was more poignant. In November 1826, a petition signed by 116 Musalmans and 128 Hindus was sent to the House of Commons welcoming the Jury Act but protesting against its discriminatory clauses. This petition is, possibly, the first record of a joint Hindu-Muslim endeavour to ameliorate their grievances against discrimination in terms of religion.³

Rammohan looked at British rule as an occasion for improving the lot of his people irrespective of caste, creed or religion, and as an opportunity to take his people out of the decadence under which they were labouring. The Hindu orthodoxy, however, looked at the British conquest from a different point of view. The *India Gazette* of 25th December, 1831 referred to *Samachar Chandrika*, the mouthpiece of the Hindu orthodoxy, edited by Bhawani-charan Bandopadhyaya, and wrote that the *Chandrika* hoped that the "Mussalmans will be driven out of public jobs." The *Chandrika* was sore when the appeal of the Hindu orthodoxy in favour of continuance of the custom of *Satee* was rejected by the Privy Council and wrote in its November 14, 1832 issue :

1. cf. *Madras Government Gazette* (Nov. 3, 1826).
2. cf. *Mirror of Parliament*, 1831, Vol. II, p. 1836.
3. cf. *Bengal Hurkaru*, 1828.

If a mother administers poison—a father sells his son—or the King commits injustice—then from whom is deliverance to be obtained....When such an injury against religion as this is committed, we must conclude that justice has departed from the earth.... if Hindus had any other place to which they could go, they might prolong their lives in the observance of their religion....it is not the custom of Hindus to go to other countries....Neither can they rise in insurrection....Had they possessed the ability to do so, the Mussalman princes could not come and overthrow the Hindus....The Hindus are now rebelling in heart, because of injury done to religion....There is no doubt, however, that they will see many wonderful, unheard of, unthought of marvels—such as conflagrations, inundations, drought, deluging rain, famine, plague, lightnings, the bursting of the heavens, variances, confusions, and such like calamities. The Hindus can now only appeal to Him who is Lord of the King ; and when they rebel, they have no further power.

On 9th March, 1830 *John Bull* quoted *Chandrika* as saying
We have been subject to no distress under the Government of the Company, it is only the abolition of *Suttee* which has given us disquietude.

On the 17th November, 1832 the *Chandrika* wrote :

.... after the Musalmans had committed many outrages, they at last set themselves to overthrow religion, and they were removed. After having experienced many sufferings under the government of the Musalmans, we had coolness (quiet) for a short time under the Mlechas....The preservation of the Hindu religion....is in great danger....The impious enemies of our religion now say, "Go and die by the Ganges": and so, indeed, Hindus would do well to do. Only they would be guilty of the sin of suicide; and for fear of this none will be able to do it. But it would be better than living deprived of religion.

Slowly the Hindu orthodoxy was finding causes for com-

plaints against the British rulers. Covertly, the *Chandrika* warned them that they should not interfere with the religious practices of the Hindus lest they suffer the same fate as their predecessors who committed outrages on the Hindu religion though in its 2nd July, 1831 issue it had already assured the East India Company that "we believe that the Hindus are far more devoted to their sovereign than any other people." The complaint was not directed against the loss of the "political consequences" of the natives of India; it was directed against the Government's support for movements for the eradication of social evils in the Hindu society. Rammohan, however, was motivated by an entirely different inspiration.

Rammohan was appalled at the state of affairs in the Hindu society and religion and also at the decadence which was there in all aspects of life in the country. He knew that decadent Muslim rule could not be of any help towards the eradication of economic, political, social and religious evils. He sought a level of transformation of his people that would feed back into life, partly by exposing the ways that culture, civilisation, religion, politics and economics generally played into the hands of a diseased and decadent civilisation, and partly by offering actual models, as it were, of rejuvenation and spiritual expansion. As against Rammohan's pioneering efforts to bring his people out of the morass of superstitious, religious cults, a decadent economy, culture and civilisation, the Hindu orthodoxy hoped that the British rule of law should provide them with the necessary umbrella under which they would be able to perpetuate their own decadence. They treated their own decadence as a matter of glory and failed to recognise the pains of living in a moribund society whose strangle-hold was already dehumanising its members.

XIII SAMYA AND RELIGIOUS NATIONALISM

The attitude of the Hindu orthodoxy towards the Muslims was shared even by the non-Hindus who were not Muslims. The Indian Christian community which generally kept themselves aloof from all political movements did not have a similar distance from the Muslim community as the Hindus

had. Communal rioting between the Hindus and Christians is conspicuous by its absence. The same is true about the relationship between the Hindus and other non-Muslim communities. There are very rare instances of communal rioting between the Hindus and religious groups other than the Muslims. The numerical weakness of the non-Muslim, non-Hindu religious communities in India alone does not provide sufficient explanation for this phenomenon. If that were the case, one would have to explain why there is practically no record of communal rioting between the Christian community and the Hindu community in the state of Kerala where the Christians constitute about one third of the total population. The theory, that the British alone were responsible for communal feuds between the Hindus and Muslims because they wanted to divide the country and rule, is not only naive but also puerile. If the Indian people were such an angelic lot as the propounders of the theory wish us to believe, how could the British divide them into strifing religious communities. How can one explain the continuation of riots between different sections of the Hindu and Muslim communities in independent India? The theory that it is a hang-over from British rule is a facile generalisation of a complex phenomenon.

However, even Derozio, who was a Christian, was not immune from the characteristic Hindu attitude towards the Muslim community which showed its ugly face with the establishment of the British rule in India. He wrote:

The Moslem is come down to spoil the land
The Hindu hath marched forward to repel
 The lawless plunderer of his shrines,
 The savage, rude disturber of his peace.¹

Derozio discovered the peaceful and idyllic life of the ancient Hindus in the works of the orientalisists and following them he believed that the idyllic life of the Hindus was ruined by the Muslims. But that is not all; he also found that "the Hindu hath marched forward to repel the lawless plunderer of his holy shrines..." and the "savage disturber of his peace." Almost all the Derozians followed their master in this attitude.

1. Henry Louis Vivian Derozio, *Poems* (Calcutta, 1972), p. 15.

The romantic adulation of the Hindu past and hatred towards the Muslim rulers found expression in the writings of Iswar Chandra Gupta, Rangalal Bandopadhyaya and others. Iswar Gupta was the mentor of Bankim. Rangalal published his *Padmini Upakhyan* in 1858. Rangalal's patriotism was essentially a Hindu patriotism. He directed his vituperative powers not against his rulers, but against the past Muslim rulers. He deplored the degeneration of the Hindus but hoped that there will be a Hindu regeneration under the British rule. Many Hindu nationalists have taken *Padmini Upakhyan* as a call for revolt against the British raj. They maintain that the anti-Muslim stance and pro-British advocacy in Rangalal are only to be seen as ruses to avoid British censorship. But in addition to the fact that the tenor of Rangalal's writings does not support such a view, it may be pointed out that there was hardly any censorship in Rangalal's days.

There is nothing much to commend in Rangalal as a poet. As a poet he can be rated as even below standard. Michael Madhusudan Dutta, the greatest poet of the 19th century India, was essentially a humanist. Bankim had great admiration for Madhusudan as a poet. In his obituary note on Madhusudan's death Bankim wrote: "Favourable wind is blowing, fly the national flag—on that inscribe 'Sreemadhusudan'." But spiritually Bankim had scarcely any relationship with Madhusudan. His kindred spirit was Rangalal, a pigmy before his own literary genius.

Iswar Chandra Gupta, for whom Bankim had great respect, reacted sharply against the Sepoy Mutiny and wrote in his *Sangbad Prabhakar* that among those evil-minded people who were the main enemies of the Government, the Muslims were in the majority. He complained that though the Muslims had been given equal rights to sit with the Hindus in the same class rooms of schools established by the Government yet they had not been able to develop a sense of loyalty to the Crown. The editorial comments of Iswar Gupta's *Sambad Prabhakar* give us a picture of the Hindu orthodox intelligentsia's reaction to the Sepoy Mutiny. Though it may be conceded that the

Mutiny was not a revolt for national emancipation and that if it had succeeded, it would have put the clock of India's progress back, it should be noticed that the orthodox Hindu literati reacted adversely to the Mutiny not because it was a retrograde step taken by the mutineers but because, if it succeeded, it would have put the Muslims back in power as, according to Iswar Gupta, the Muslims were in the majority among the mutineers. On the 20th June, 1857 *Sambad Prabhakar* wrote that "under the Muslim rule we did not get any freedom to practice religion, there was always tyrannical rule." After this it wrote about the British rule.

This rule is as blissful as the rule of Ram We are ... all getting our fulfilment in all aspects of our life by being nurtured as children by a mother under the aegis of the ruler of the world, the queen of England.

And further :

Let the Goddess of British Raj remain steady ... and let us enjoy the heavenly bliss of independence for ever.

Iswar Gupta's concept of independence was not independence from foreign rule. It was a hope that Muslim tyranny would not come back, peace would prevail and the Hindu society would continue in its pristine glory. The Hindu orthodoxy laboured under some sort of Anglo-philia-cum-Muslimophobia. It will be seen later that Iswar Gupta's concept of liberty under foreign domination was shared by Bankim. Iswar Gupta and Bhudeb Mukhopadhyaya, the two elder contemporaries of Bankim, had profound influence on him. Bankim, himself, had written in eulogistic terms on Iswar Gupta. Bhodeb, he regarded as a sort of *Guru*. Both Bhodeb and Iswar Gupta were staunch supporters of Hindu conservatism and were highly critical of any social reform movement for improving the state of Hindu society. Hindu society, according to Bhodeb, was the abode of absolute bliss and he was eager to save it from the English educated reformer's zeal. He masked his antagonism to social reform movements in

sophistry, very typical of the educated Hindu conservatives of his times. In his book *Samajik Prabandha* (Essays on Society) he maintained that reforms should come from within the society. He drew a distinction between the Hindu and the European societies and forcefully propagated the canard that European society was essentially pluralistic, gave the highest priority to acquisition of wealth. He recognised that such social norms might provide incentives to individual efforts for self-aggrandisement but would give rise to greedy, jealous, avaricious and restless knaves. In contradistinction to this, Hindu society found solutions to the problems of inequality, endemic to all social structures, by devising the system of division of the society into castes. He viewed the caste system as a sort of shock absorber to neutralise the evils of conflicts within the society, embedded in its endemic inequality, by allotting to each caste its station and duties in society. He, further, maintained that the caste system fosters a great deal of self-respect to the individual by prescribing to the individual his station in society; and discerned a special feature of the caste system in its efficacy to do away with the sense of inferiority regarding one's station in life. He saw a sense of pride even among the untouchables. The station and duties apportioned to a caste fosters self-respect among its members and makes the system particularly beneficial for a subject nation.

Bankim shared the faith of Bhoodeb. He asked his compatriots to write a new brand of history. With his mighty pen, keen intellect and extraordinary literary genius, he endeavoured to establish that the Muslim interlude, at least its late phase, was something alien to the general course of Indian history and its genius. He dismissed the works of historians like Stuart, Marshman and others as unhistorical, mostly on unhistorical grounds, and wrote in his essay *Banglar Itihash Sambandhe Kayekti Katha* (some Remarks on the History of Bengal) :

Are there any historically authentic words in these books? According to our opinion there is no history of Bengal in any English book ... This is not the history of Bengal; this is not even part of the

history of Bengal. There is no relationship between these and the history of Bengal. There is no history of the Bengalees here. Those Bengalees who accept these as history of Bengal are not Bengalees. Those who, without scrutiny, accept the accounts of the Musalmans, who were blinded by the glory of their own people, who were deceitful and anti-Hindu, are not Bengalees.

And further :

After the conquest of the Mughals, Bengal had her evil days ... the wealth of Bengal did not remain in Bengal; it all travelled to Delhi.

Bankim was convinced that the Hindus were ethically much superior to all others. In a letter to Kumar Benoykrishna Deb, dated 27th July, 1892 he wrote :

The Bengali society is not dependent upon the *Sastras*—it is based either on the customs of the country or on local customs ... Personally, I believe that religious and moral regeneration cannot take place without social progress; invoking the authority of the *Sastras* or some such books cannot bring about social change.....

After quoting from the *Gita*, he continues :

If the author of the *Mahabharat* has not indulged in falsehood, if the *Avatar* (incarnation) of Iswar (God) of the Hindus is not a liar, whatever is good for the people is Dharma ... If something is for the good of the people, why should we shun it because it is against the *Smriti* (remembered) *Sastras*?

I do not think that everything that is found in the Dharma *Sastras*, is necessarily Hindu Dharma. Hindu Dharma is very catholic. Falling into the hands of the *Smartas* (compilers of the *Smritis*) ... it has become very parochial. The *Smarta Rishis* Purveyors of *Smriti*) are not the founders of Hindu Dharma. Hindu Dharma is eternal—it was there before them. So there may be conflicts between *Sanatan* Dharma and the *Sastras*. Wherever we come across such conflicts, it would be prudent to rely on *Sanatan* Dharma. I cannot accept any conflict bet-

ween Dharma and Hindu Dharma. If there is a conflict between Dharma and Hindu Dharma, what will be the glory of Hindu Dharma? Why should we then call it *Sanatan Dharma*? There is no such conflict.

In a short letter Bankim thus moved from the customs of the people to the good of the people. Many of the customs of the Hindus are enshrined in the *Dharma Sastras*.¹ The customs do not and should not change unless the people want the change. The people know that is good for them. *Vox populi vox De*. Even ethics, norms of decency, humane considerations, justice, and all such other things which human beings normally value should be decided by the people. Only that which is wanted by the people is good. The rest are either ravings of a lunatic or macabre machinations of a diabolical mind. The innovator of social change was always a suspect to Bankim. He regaled his readers with his sardonic remarks on the absurdity of reform movements. The relation between populism and nationalism is not difficult to trace.

Aurobindo who regarded Bankim as an apostle of Indian nationalism, went a step further. In the August, 1894, issue of *Induprakash*, while commenting on the character of educated young ladies who were inspired to get educated by the reform movements initiated by the *Brahmo Samaj*, Aurobindo wrote :

Our social reformers ... have turned out a soulless and superficial being fit only for flirtation, match-making, and playing on the piano.

1. Dharma is a blanket term. It covers all sorts of meanings. It is usually translated as 'Religion'. But we hear expressions like : 'It is the Dharma of the material object that it cannot remain in the air without being suspended from something.' 'It is the Dharma of the thief to steal.' 'It is the Dharma of the Kshatriya to fight.' 'It is the Dharma of liquid to flow downwards.' Bankim tried hard to give us his understanding of *Sanatan Dharma*. His interpretation of *Sanatan Dharma* ultimately landed him in the glorification of the ideal man as found in the *Gita*. Krishna of the *Gita* may be the ideal man, he may be even an incarnation of God, he may be God himself. The fact remains that he is an ideal man of the Hindus, an incarnation of Hindu God, a Hindu God. The universality that Bankim claims for him is only an asseveration of the universality and eternity of *Sanatan Dharma*.

Aurobindo, after due performance of *Prayaschitta* (Purification rites), married according to the Hindu rites a girl of 14 in April, 1901 when he was 29 years old. Afterwards he wrote several letters to his teenage wife pouring out his spiritual quest in the realms of the supra-mundane and the supra-conscious and desired that she should live the life of a Hindu Goddess of his conception. Aggressive Hindu nationalism received support from foreigners like Okakura, Nivedita and others. Miss Margaret Noble, an Irish lady who was a devotee of Swami Vivekananda and was named by him as Nivedita, became a great supporter and theoretician of aggressive Hindu nationalism. In her *Aggressive Hinduism* she wrote that no other religion but Hinduism is capable of bringing the needed dynamic transformation of life. She further wrote:

Aggression is to be the dominant characteristic of India that is to-day ... Merely to change the attitude of the mind, in this way, is already to accomplish a revolution.

Nivedita only elaborated Bankim's ideas in this regard and influenced a whole generation of extremist nationalists like Tilak, Aurobindo and others. The close relationship of Aurobindo, Nivedita, Tilak, Bipin Pal and other extremist Hindu nationalists and revolutionaries with Bankim is not at all difficult to trace. The Hindu nationalist and the Hindu revolutionary both derived inspiration from the obscurantist exposition of Hindu Dharma by Bankim and the neo-Hinduism of Vivekananda, Dayananda and others. Both claimed that they worked for the good of the people.

Bankim made mystification of the people more and more common as he found it increasingly difficult to adduce any rational justification to oppose the social reform movements. The standard, at least that is what he wanted his readers to believe, was the maximum welfare of his community; his interest was the satisfaction of all those who were to fulfil their stations and duties in a quiet and orderly manner. And one's station and duties are always given in the customs of the country or in local customs. He could cite compensating instances against

the horrors of certain aspects of Hindu social and religious life and even could appeal to science to support his theory of social change and Hindu superstitions. In the last analysis, what he advocated appears to be a matter of indifference towards all social change. And this he masked in his determination to maintain social order. His sophistry vacillated between conservative finesse and poise, on the one hand, and emotional acceptance of the glorious Hindu past, together with a zeal for resuscitating and preserving that past, on the other.

Bankim inspired the Hindu extremist, revolutionary and conservative nationalists. The revolutionary also talks about the people; but he adopts a different vocabulary from that of the conservative and often uses expressions like: 'the sanctity of life', 'the will of the people is the will of God or history', 'the progressive class which will liberate the people from bondage', and 'the panacea for all evils is the revolution'. The romantic element in him also glorifies the past; and he derives confidence for his cause from such glorification. His sophistry vacillates between the opportunist adroitness of a self-centered life, on the one hand, and an irrational, emotional fervour for self-sacrifice for the cause of the revolution, on the other. Populistic adoration of the people is the common denominator between the revolutionary and the nationalist.

Bankim's ambivalent attitude towards foreign domination and independence, cosmopolitanism and Hindu orthodox parochialism, violence and non-violence, nationalism and *a-nationalism* of the Hindu tradition, criticism of the British rule and appreciation of the same, made him an apostle of both Hindu revolutionaries and the Hindu non-violent, petition-making and resolution passing nationalists. The petition-making, non-violent, resolution passing nationalists could at least hope to enlist the support of the Muslim community in passing their resolutions, in their non-violent movements and in signing their petitions. It is no accident that the extremist revolutionaries could hardly enlist the support of any member of the Muslim community. As a matter of fact they never thought of enlisting their support. The extremist revolutionaries often

used religious ideals for political purposes. *The Rowlat Commission Report* of 1918 commented on Aurobindo's booklet *Bhawani Mandir* which was used by the revolutionaries as one of the main sources of their inspiration and wrote : "The book is a remarkable instance of perversion of religious ideals to political purpose." Neither a Muslim could accept *Bhawani Mandir* as a primary source of his inspiration to plunge into the work of national emancipation and yet retain his allegiance to Islam nor could he worship the nation as the mother Goddess.

In an article—*Bharatbarsher Swadhinata Ebang Paradhinata* (India's Independence and Dependence)—Bankim echoes Bhoodeb by distinguishing between independence and liberty. Through a marvellous sophistry he establishes that a country may be independent without liberty just as it can enjoy liberty without independence. He also recognised that dependence was not an unmixed evil and wrote in the article mentioned above :

We are a dependent nation—we shall remain dependent for a long time—we need not delve into this problem. We only want to know whether or not in ancient India because of independence the Indian subjects were happier than what they are to-day. We have come to the conclusion that in contemporary India the Brahmins and Kshatriyas, people belonging to the higher echelons of the society, have been degraded, the Sudras, i.e., the ordinary subjects have progressed to some extent.

In the same article Bankim says that the English have taught the Indians two things—nationalism and independence. Bankim desired to graft the foreign idea of nationalism with Hindu society. Like a typical nationalist he wrote in his article—*Bharat Kalanka*—(Ignominy of India)—that

There are many nations in this world other than the Hindus. It is not possible that their good will always lead to our good. On many occasions their good may lead to our misery. Wherever their good is our misery, we shall try to thwart their good.

If we are to torture other nations for this, we shall not refrain from doing so. On the other hand, just as their good may lead to our misery so also our good may lead to their misery. Come what may; for that reason we shall not refrain from bringing good to our nation; if necessary, we shall inflict misery on others in order to bring good to our own nation.

The end justifies the means. The end is the bringing of good to the nation; the means may be anything. This is a reflection of Bankim's double theory of truth a reference to which has already been made. But his mind shifted from the double theory of truth, the end justified the means, etc., to an entirely different sphere according to his convenience. For, here is what he writes in his article *Bohu Bibaha* (Polygamy) :

To those who say that for achieving the good, if necessary, one can take recourse to bad means, we will say the man who indulges in bad things is reprehensible no matter whether or not his work is motivated by good or bad ends. The man who steals to satisfy his hunger is as much a thief as a man who steals to feed others. Rather, the thief who steals for giving food to others is less pardonable than the one who steals to satisfy his own hunger; he steals because he is hungry. In the same way one who becomes deceitful to protect his own life is less reprehensible than the man who does bad things to protect others. He who advises the sinful and deceitful man to use deceitful and bad means for the achievement of the good, according to us, is the worst enemy of man. He is a devotee of immoral education.

Consistency and coherence are not very much prized by the romantics, revolutionaries, populists, and nationalists, specially so by the Hindu nationalists. One of the major sources of liberal ethical and political theories, in which Bankim was educated, has been an attempt to avoid moral disputations, to cut ethical imperatives, which

might lead to disputations, to a minimum, and to seek the absolutely basic rules without which social life would be impossible, and which may, therefore, be supposed to be acceptable to all shades of opinion. The force of the image of a state of nature is found here. Bankim also delved into questions of the original state of society and came to the conclusion that without religion no society would have been possible. Unlike many liberals he did not see that political and social institutions and moral rules are not nurseries of virtues or trumpet calls to a pure and holy life but traffic lights and highway codes, not prescribing to the traveller where he shall go but providing the framework within which he and others may travel to their separate and individually chosen destinations without colliding. Bankim could not go the whole hog with the liberals. He had apocalyptic delusions and advocated the mystique of the ideal man. The concept of the ideal man should not be confused with something akin to the Kantian moral law. The ideal man is not the *a priori* basis of morality. It is a historical man. The ideal man, Bankim thought, would spur the decadent Hindus to action and help them in asserting their supremacy. Ground must be prepared for the coming of the ideal man. He is the saviour of *Sanatan Dharma*. He appears only when Dharma touches the nadir of degradation. Bankim, however, could not fully accept the fatalism implied in the *Gita* where God takes incarnations on this earth to save the earth from destruction; and the point where God's intervention becomes necessary is decided by God himself. In contradistinction to this Bankim thought that the Hindus must do something on their own. This doing, however, will be a sort of invocation to the oncoming *Avatar* (incarnation), the ideal man.

In order to spur the decadent Hindus to consolidate themselves into a self-aggrandising entity, Bankim had to show that the Hindus also put up resistance against Muslim tyranny and that, in their stride, they did not eschew violence. In the article *Bharat Kalanka* (Ignominy of India) he draws the attention of his readers to the ins-

tances when the Hindu society tried to galvanise itself into a nation :

In history only twice there were attempts to establish a nation within the Hindu society. Once, Sivaji in Maharastra sang this sacred hymn. Maharastra woke up at his lion's roar

The magician of the second time was Ranjit Singh ; the spell was *Khalsa*. As the bond of nationhood became tighter, even parts of the land of the Pathans came under the Hindus. Hearing the roar of the lion on the banks of the Satadru even the hearts of the dauntless English trembled.

This aspect of Bankim provided sustenance to the Hindu extremists in India. But the aspect of Bankim where he welcomed the British rule as a saviour of the Hindus from Muslim tyranny, as a progressive force to take the country forward from the degeneration into which it was thrown because of Muslim rule, provided the general paradigm of the main current of Indian nationalism for a long time. Bankim regarded British rule in India as a prerequisite of essential character to the building up of the political autonomy of the country. The Indian National Congress adopted the resolution for complete independence from British rule long after Bankim breathed his last. The concern of the Hindu to protect his own interest and improve his own lot under the protective umbrella provided by the British rule slowly gave way to Indian nationalism. The dream of Bankim that the Hindus will eventually galvanise themselves into a nation was slowly being actualised. Hindu nationalism vitiated the rise of Indian nationalism. Ultimately the Indian sub-continent had to be partitioned to provide a separate land of overwhelmingly Muslim majority.

The Muslim community, especially the Muslim gentry, lived in comparative isolation from the changing patterns ushered in by the British rule.

Everywhere in Bengal ... Muhammedans complain of the 'Ingilabi-i-zamanah' or 'the bad turn of circumstances' and the 'ashrafgardi' or 'the upset-

ting of respectable classes'. The two terms I have heard thousands of times. They sum up the present dissatisfaction of the Muhammedans.

And further :

... I have invariably met with most educated fathers and most illiterate youths. In the Muhammedan villages ... I have often been told of the learned men of the past generations, whose learning attracted pupils from all parts of Bengal, who taught the most advanced works of Arabic and Persian literature in places where now-a-days scarcely an almanac or a book of the fairy tales are to be met with. There is no demand for the old education, and poverty forces the people to turn from intellectual work to manual labour.¹

Most of the Muslim of India were converts from the poorer sections of Indians. The rich Muslim gentry continued to lick the wounds caused by their lost glory and refused to bring their community in line with the cross-currents of world movements. An Islamic version of the cult of Raghunandan kept them aloof from the rising trends of technical, industrial, political, scientific and cultural progress. They even refused to recognise that with the introduction of the British rule the concept of the abstract juridical 'person' was introduced in India. Hinduism and Islam in India had to face the challenge of the ideas of freedom of the individual, equality, fraternity and equal justice for all.

In contradistinction to the attitude of the Muslim gentry, the Hindu gentry could recognise the necessity for adopting themselves to the changing patterns. Bankim wanted the Hindu civil society to transform itself into a political entity. For this the first requirement, at least, that is what he thought, was the consolidation of Hindu civil society. The civil society must be preserved and rejuvenated and only then could it transform itself into

1. cf. *Educational Proceedings*, August, 1872: Letter from H. Blochmann, Assistant Professor of the Calcutta Madrasah to J. Sutcliffe, Principal of the Calcutta Madrasah (Calcutta, 19th October, 1871.)

a political entity. Religion to Bankim was an important, rather, the most important, element in the civil society. Hence if Hindu society were to politicise itself and yet maintain its distinctive character, it must not sacrifice its orientation round religion. Hinduism is antithetical to egalitarianism. In it the station and duties of an individual are predetermined. But Bankim was enamoured of the British legal system which is based on the principle of equality in the eyes of law. Under the circumstance Bankim had three ways open before him. He could deny the basic structure of Hindu society; he could refuse to accept the politicisation of the Hindu society and let it continue in its masochistic dalliance. He, however, could do neither of these two. He found the answer to the quandary in following the ideal man. The last few decades of his life he devoted him to a study of Hindu Dharma and especially of the *Gita*. He found the ideal man in Krishna of the *Gita* and *Mahabharat*. The opposing tendencies of increasing tension between politicisation and Hindu society could be resolved only by the recognition of the ideal man. Bankim's predicament is endemic to the cultural milieu of the Hindus. His theoretical dogmatism is, however, highly ingenious; it includes the most various elements of faith and superstition.

In many places Bankim tries to explain why the Hindu society had become incapable of defending itself against Muslim tyranny; and he shows the way to defend it in his *Anandamath*. The period of Muslim tyranny was over because of the violent opposition of the dedicated Hindu *Santans* with their firm allegiance to the faith and also with their unflinching devotion to their leader who was an ideal man, a nishkam Karmi, a man who dedicated himself to the cause of preservation of *Dharma* without expecting any reward, a liberated person, according to the Hindu conception of the same. But the ideal man's inner voice, as it were, dictated to him that the bad days were over as he saw the British raj being established bringing protection to and reinstatement of *Dharma*. He withdrew himself to his own spiritual pursuit. However, though the leader of the revolt in

Anandamath was satisfied that his country had embarked on a period of glory with the advent of the British power, the Hindu nationalists were not so sure. Even under British protection their civil society was in jeopardy. Soon they found that their civil society could not be protected without their having a say in the political society—a thing which they felt was denied to them by the foreign government. They found that it was hardly possible to enjoy ‘liberty’ without independence. They came to the realisation that British domination was an impediment to their aspiration to consolidate themselves to perform their historical role of the nation, something which expresses itself in struggle. Attempts were made to induct Muslim support in this struggle and to galvanise the whole country into one nation. How far these attempts registered any measure of success, only the future can tell. Can Hinduism live with its characteristic social and religious structures in an atmosphere where the national cause will be the chief motivating factor? Maybe the Hindu agglomerative genius will be able to find some working arrangement among nationalism, Hinduism, non-Hindu religions, socialism, democracy, individual liberty, cult of the hero, rule of law and what not. After all, the law of contradiction is not a law of life; it is a law of logic. And one can pack up one’s logic and send it to wilderness.

Bankim, like Rammohan wanted his compatriots to be conscious of their contemporary world. In 1828 Rammohan wrote to Digby :

The present system of religion adhered to by the Hindus is not well calculated to promote there *political interest*.. The distinction of caste, introducing innumerable division and sub-division among them has entirely deprived them of patriotic feeling. It is, I think, necessary that some change should take place in their religion, at least for the sake of their political advantage and social comfort.

The old Sanskrit system of education and learning, according to Rammohan, was “best suited to keep this

country in perpetual darkness." But Rammohan was not a nationalist.

In several of his writings, prior to 1872, Bankim almost echoed the spirit of Rammohan. In his essay on *The Study of Hindu Philosophy* he writes :

Philosophy as taught by the pundits, is simply a storehouse of verbal quibbles, and high proficiency in it is considered synonymous with high proficiency in the art of profitless wranglings. Why Jagadisa should have used nine letters where he might have used five or of how many significations an ambiguous word Gadadhara's Commentary can admit, are regarded as the highest problems of which it is allowed to the human intellect to attempt the solution. The sum of useful knowledge would in no way be diminished, if by some fortunate accident, the philosophy of the *tols* disappeared from the fact of the earth.¹

It should, however, be noted that even in these writings Bankim is not sceptical about the ethical nature of the major tenets of Hindu Philosophy; he is only deploring the state of affairs in learning and education of Hindu Philosophy. He could see that

English civilisation has pulled down the three hundred and thirty million deities of Hinduism and set up, in the total space once occupied by them, its own tutelary deities, Comfort and his brother, Respectability.²

He also recognised that

Hinduism is in need of a reformation ... reformed and purified it may yet stand forth before the world as the noblest system of individual and social culture available to the Hindu even in this age of progress. I have certainly no serious hope of progress in India except in Hinduism—in Hinduism reformed, regenerated and purified.³

1. *Bankim Rachanabali* edited by Jogesh Chandra Bagal. Vol. III pp. 142-43. (Sahitya Samsad, Calcutta, 1969.)
2. *Ibid.* p. 139.
3. *Ibid.* p. 235.

The quest for reformed, regenerated and purified Hinduism, in the context of his time, led Bankim into the soulless collectivism of nationalism hinged on the cult of the saviour who chooses his own occasion to appear on this earth whenever he decides that the cup of human misery and degradation is full. The picture of equality that he drew in his essay *Samya* was antithetical to the cult of nationalism based on his idea of reformed, regenerated and purified Hinduism.

BANKIM ON EQUALITY

**(An English translation of
Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay's
Bengali article, *Samya*)**

by
M. K. HALDAR

BANKIM ON EQUALITY

THE EXPRESSION—so-and-so is rich; so-and-so is poor—is often heard. Such a remark is not a mere sound. One of the main motives of human action is recognition of diversity among men. So-and-so is a rich man, so present him all the milk, cream and butter available. Select the choicest words from the ocean of language, make a garland of them and garland him; and this you should do because he is a rich man. There, the big man is coming—you must carefully remove even the tiniest, almost invisible, thorn from his way lest it pricks his feet. You must leave the shady parts on the road of life and stand under the blazing sun because the big man is going by. You must collect all the flowers of pleasure on earth and all of you should cooperate to make a bed with them and let the big man relax on it. And you—you are not a big man—stand aside, not a single good thing of this world is for you. For you only the hard hitting slick cane is there so that it may have an occasional dialogue with your back to provide entertainment to the big.

Wherein lies the difference between the rich and the poor? What makes Ram a big man, Jadu a small man? The cynical try to explain this to us somehow. Jadu does not know how to steal. He does not know how to cheat, he does not know how to deprive others of all their possessions through deceit and usurp the same for himself, therefore Jadu is a small man; Ram has accumulated wealth through deceit, theft, chicanery, so he is a big man. Or, Ram himself is a timid good man, but his great grandfather was an expert in theft, deceit, etc.; he left property by stealing everything of his master's. Ram is the greatgrandson of a mean thief, therefore he is a big man. Jadu's grandfather ate things procured by his own labour—therefore he is small man. Or, Ram has married the daughter of a cheat, because of that he is a big man. Shower flowers on the glory of Ram.

Or Ram has been blessed by some king's man as he could salute him, could digest all his abuses and occasional kicks, or he did some acts even more worthy than

these. Ram has tied the *Chaprash* round his neck—on the strength of the *Chaprash* he has become a big man. We are not talking about the Bengalis only—the character of the *Chaprash* bearer in every country of the earth is the same—before the master he is a worm among worms, but before others?—Avatar of *Dharma*!! So whoever you may be, salute him with both your hands, he is the incarnation of *Dharma*. He has no sense of discrimination between *Dharma* and *Adharma*, he is rather addicted to *Adharma*,—but what harm is there in that? Because of royal favour he simply is the incarnation (*Avatar*) of *Dharma*. He may be an ignoramus, you may be well-versed in all the *Sastras*—but do not bother about that now ; he is a big man, prostrate yourself before his feet.

There is another kind of big man. Gopal Thakur (*Brahmin*), is “burdened with his unmarried daughter”—and because he is burdened with his unmarried daughter he is begging from door to door. Even so, he is a big man. Why, because Gopal is a Brahmin. You are a Sudra—however big a man you may be, you will have to take the dust of his feet. Now it is noon, be careful lest the Brahmin goes away annoyed from your door—feed him well, give him whatever he wants and let him go away contentedly. Gopal is poor, illiterate, a worse specimen of humanity, a sinner, yet he is a big man.

So the world is full of diversity. There is diversity in everything. If Ram was not born in this country, was born in another country, that would have caused a difference ; if Ram was not born of the womb of Pachi, was born of the womb of Jadi, that would have caused a difference. The world is full of diversities.

There should be diversity on this earth. Nature has sent us to this playground of the world after making different laws of this diversity. My bones are thicker than yours, and very hard—I have more strength in my arms than you have in yours—I can knock you out with one single blow ; thus I am a bigger man than you are. Saudamini is more beautiful than Kumudini ; so, Saudamini is the wife of a Zamindar, Kumudini cuts jute.

Jadu's brain weighs ten ounces more than that of Ram, so, Jadu is respected in the world, Ram is despised.

So diversity is a law of nature. There is diversity in everything in the world. There are real differences between man and man. Just as there are natural differences—i.e., differences which are in accordance with the laws of nature—so also there are unnatural differences—the difference between the Brahmin and Sudra is an unnatural one. The sin of killing a Brahmin is heavy, but that of killing a Sudra is light; this is not in accordance with the laws of nature. Why is the Brahmin inviolable while the Sudra is not? Why is the Sudra at the giving end and only the Brahmin at the receiving end? Instead of this why is there no rule which requires only those to donate who have the power to give, and only those to get things who need them?

The difference between the natives and the *Bilati* (foreigners, especially, Englishmen) is another instance of unnatural differences. But I cannot stir up this topic now.

The most serious difference is the difference in wealth. As a result of this at places there are one or two persons who cannot find ways of spending their wealth—but millions of people fall victim to fatal diseases because of the want of food.

Of the different causes that thwart the progress of society or put it on the path of decline, the excess of unnatural differences is the most important. That India has been suffering such miseries for a long time is primarily due to excessive social differences.

It is not a fact that in India alone there are excesses of differences. This world is full of diversity, all countries are caught in the net of differences. In the progress-oriented societies, those who care for society have pulled together and have minimised these difficulties. Such countries have witnessed all round progress. Rome is a typical example. The initial differences within the Roman kingdom—the class differences between the Patricians and the Plebeians—were obliterated in a type of social cohesion. The past differences in that kingdom

—differences between the citizens and the alien—were mellowed by the divine political sagacity of its rulers. That is why Rome became the master of the world.

Such things did not happen elsewhere. Only the other day there was a fierce civil war in America on the issue of abolition of slavery—like the treatment of wounds by surgery, a social evil was used for the good of the society. The great surgeons of this type are Danton and Robespierre. The aim of the first and second French Revolutions was to replace differences by equality.

But everywhere such drastic treatment was not necessary. In most of the countries equality has been respected and established because of the advice of the advisers. Words are mightier than weapons—education is more effective than war. Christianity and Buddhism spread through words—Islam spread itself with the help of weapons. But the number of Musalmans on this earth is less than that of the Buddhists or the Christians.

Three miracles have happened on earth. With long gaps of time three great and pure souls were born in three different countries to preach a great and blissful message. The core of that great message is, "All men are equal". By preaching this divine and exceedingly pure message they sowed the seeds of civilization and progress. Whenever mankind has fallen into misery and has put its feet on the path of decline, then ever at that very time a great man has given the clarion call "All of you are equal—behave equally to one another". Then misery was replaced by bliss, degradation by progress.

First, Sakya Singha Budhadev. When India was sick with the excesses of differences introduced by the outcomes of Vedic Dharma, he appeared and rescued India. Of all social differences in this world there is none more serious than the caste differences in ancient India. Members of all other castes are liable to be killed under specific circumstances—while the Brahmins may commit hundreds of sins and yet enjoy impunity. The Brahmin may do all manner of harm to you. But you are not allowed to do any harm back to the Brahmins. You prostrate yourself before the feet of the Brahmin and

take the dust of his feet on your head—but the Sudra is untouchable. Even the water touched by a Sudra is unusable. The Sudra has no right to happiness on this earth, he is there only to do lowly work. He has no right to knowledge which is the very breath of life. He is bound by the *Sastras*, but he has no right to see with his own eyes what the *Sastras* are, even his after-life is in the hands of the Brahmin. Whatever the Brahmin says he must follow, that is the only way he can hope for a better after-life, or else he is condemned without any hope. If he can give gifts to the Brahmin, only then can he hope for a better after-life; but, the Brahmin who accepts that gift of the Sudra falls in the scale of *Dharma*. The Sudra can hope for a better after-life only if he devotes himself to the service of the Brahmin. Yet the Sudra is a man, and so is the Brahmin. Even the relationship between the captive and his master in Europe was not so reprehensible as that which obtained between the Sudra and the Brahmin. Even today when the Indians talk of wide differences, they give the example of “the difference between the Brahmin and the Sudra”.

India stood on the road of decline because of wide caste differences. The source of progress is progress in knowledge. You will not be able to cite any happiness, except the ones which we get through the satisfaction of our senses—a thing which we share in common with the animals, which is not based on progress of knowledge. Because of caste differences the road to the progress of knowledge was blocked. The Sudra has no right to pursue knowledge; only the Brahmin has. The majority of the people in India belong to castes lower than the Brahmins. Therefore the majority of the people remained illiterate. Imagine, if England had a system where no one but the scions of the families of Russell, Cavendish, Stanley and a few other selected ones were allowed to pursue knowledge, where would British civilization be? Leave the poets, philosophers, scientists out, where would Watt, Stevenson, Arkwright have been? In India that is almost what happened.

But it is not all. Even the knowledge on which the

moribund Brahmins established their monopoly yielded evil results because of the fault of caste differences. After becoming the masters of all castes, they employed knowledge for the purpose of preserving their status as masters. They cultivated that knowledge which would perpetuate and enhance their position as masters so that the other castes bowed still lower to take the dust from the Brahmin's feet thinking that to be the be-all and end-all of their present life. Add more and more intricate forms of sacrifices and worships to the extant corpus of such things and multiply the practice of giving gifts to the Brahmins, increase the number of penances, write more false history singing the glories of the gods in the melodious language of the Aryans which in its melody can put to shame even the sound of the jingle-bells on the feet of the nymphs in heaven, and thus make the bonds of ignorance of the Indians more secure. Philosophy, Science, Literature—what is their use? Do not divert your mind on that side. Increase the volume of that *Brahman*—publicise the new *Upanishad*, *Brahman* on top of *Brahman*, *Upanishad* on top of *Upanishad*, *Sutra* on top of *Sutra*, commentaries on them, notes on the commentaries, notes on the notes; their innumerable commentaries—put India to slumber by books of *Vedic Dharma*. Learning?—Let that word be banished. *Dharma*.. Learning?—Let that word be banished.

Men became depressed, nervous and afraid of things. Brahmins write that all work involves sin—the rescue from all sins is difficult. Then, is there no rescue from sins for those who belong to castes lower than that of the Brahmin? Is spiritual bliss so difficult to obtain? Where will men go? What will they do? Who will save them from the tyranny of the *Dharma Sastras*? Who will save them from the Brahmins who have blocked all avenues of happiness? Who will give life to the Indians?

Then the pure soul Sakya Singha spreading his eternal glory appeared on the horizon of India and with a voice which went up to heaven said, "I shall deliver thee. I am telling you the core of the message of salvation, you practice that message. All of you are equal. All are sinners, everyone can get salvation through good deeds.

Caste differences are false. Sacrifice and worship are false. The Vedas are false, the Sutras are false, earthly happiness is false, who the king is, who the subject is, are all false. Only Dharma is true. Give up the pursuit of falsehood, follow the true Dharma”.

Diversity-rent India was disturbed from the Himalayas to the oceans by this great message. Buddhism spread in India—caste differences were obliterated to some extent. For about a thousand years Buddhism was prevalent in India. Historians know that his thousand years is the period of real glory in India. The emperors who spread their rule from the Himalayas to the Godavari—Asoka, Chandragupta, Shiladitya, etc.—belong to this period. During this period India—beginning from Taxila to Tamralipti—was filled with thousands of great and prosperous cities. During this time the glory of India was sung in Rome in the West and China in the East—and the kings of these countries established friendly diplomatic relations with the emperors of India. It was during this time that the Indian religious preachers travelled and spread Indian religion in half of Asia. There is evidence to show that during this period there was progress in craft also. The spectacular efflorescence of philosophic thought seems to be a corollary of Buddhism. Though it is difficult to give precise dates when we talk about the special cultivation of science, yet it can be shown that this has a very intimate relationship with the revolution in religions introduced by Sakya Singha.

The second messenger of equality is Jesus Christ. The time when Christianity began to spread was the time when Europe and West Asia were included in the Roman Empire. That was the evening of the glory of the Roman Empire. Then Rome was no longer the mother of barve legions and warriors, she was the resort of dilettante rich men who craved only for the satisfaction of their senses. Those who sported in the war fields indulged only in good food, the company of slave girls, the staged fights in the arena and derived their pleasure only from them. The patriotism which glorified Rome in the world vanished. Gradually the social equality for which we praised Rome,

the social equality because of which Rome became the master of the world, started waning. Earlier we talked about the city of Rome—now we are talking about the Roman Empire. Schisms caused by the system of slavery entered the body politic of the Roman Empire like a dangerous disease. Some men had thousands of slaves. All work which was considered to be below the dignity of the master had to be done by the slaves. Cultivation, work of household servants, work in crafts and industries, were all done by the slaves. They used to be brought and sold like cows and calves. The owner had the same rights over his slaves as he had over his cows and calves. If the master wanted to beat them, if he wanted to cut their limbs, even if he wanted to kill them, he could do so without any fear of punishment. At the behest of their masters the slaves had to take to the arena, fight against lions and tigers and meet their deaths—the masters used to see fun in that. The Roman Empire was divided into two sections—masters and slaves. One part was addicted to ceaseless pleasure—and the other part condemned to eternal misery.

But this is not the only schism. The emperor was capricious. There was no limit to his powers and depredations. Nero set fire to the city and saw the fun while fiddling on his Veena. Caligula elevated his own horse to the status of a consul. One feels ashamed to describe the caprices of Elagabalus. Whoever one might have been, however big a man one might have been, he could be executed at the mere wish of the emperor without assigning any reason, without any trial he could be killed. But over that emperor there were other emperors—the patrician soldiers. They made an emperor on one day and the next day they killed him and made another person the ruler. They used to buy and sell the Roman Empire like potatoes and *patahs* (pointed gourds; Latin, *Trichosantzel Divica*). They did to Rome whatever they liked to do. The governors of the different provinces were busy in self-aggrandisement. Where motives of self-aggrandisement are strong, the schisms are strong too.

It was at this time that Christianity spread in the

Roman Empire. The great message uttered by Christ touched the souls of men. He said, men and men are related by the relation of brotherhood. All men are equal before God. Rather, God loves those more who are sick, miserable, meek. Because of this great message the vanity of the big men was curbed—the master's vanity was curtailed—even the maimed beggar became more glorified than the emperor. He said, my kingdom is not on this earth—earthly happiness is no happiness—earthly supremacy is not supremacy. Twice we have heard two messages on the earth—these are the essences of ethics—there is no ethics above these. Once a Brahmin scion of the Aryans said on the bank of the Ganges, "He who sees others as he sees himself is the wise man". And then Jesus a scion of the Jews stood on the hill-top of Jerusalem and said, "Do unto others as you would like others to do unto you". Whether more profound sayings than these two were ever told is doubtful. This message is the foundation of the philosophy of equality.

As soon as these truths were accepted as words of religion, the bonds of slavery of the slaves started slackening, the addict to luxuries started renouncing luxuries. Thanks to this there was a blend of Romans and Barbarians resulting in the rise of powerful, progressive nations, valiant in war. They are the forerunners of the modern Europeans. At no earlier time had such material progress as can be witnessed in modern Europe been seen on earth; neither could the earlier people hope for such things. That this is the result of Christianity alone is not true; this had many causes—but the main causes are Christian ethics and Greek literature and philosophy. And that Christianity has produced only good fruits is also not true. It bore both good and bad fruits. Though Christianity is a religion of equality, in the long run it gave rise to wide inequalities. There was an inordinate increase in the powers of the clergy. In countries like Spain and France, it resulted in very serious schisms. Especially in France this got so much mixed up with the differences between the higher and the lower classes that it gave rise to the glorious French revolution. There was one churner of

this disturbed ocean—he is the man who propagated the message of equality for the third time. The third *Avatar* (messenger) of equality is Rousseau.

SECOND CHAPTER

The plight of eighteenth century France is indescribable. In this small essay there is no place for that description—there is no need for it either. World famous *Literati*, historians and acute observers have given detailed and voluminous accounts; those descriptions are easily accessible to all. One or two words will suffice for our purpose.

Carlyle sarcastically said, "The law according to which one landlord after coming back from a hunt could kill two slaves to wash his feet with their blood, that law was not then in vogue". But it was before! "During the last fifty years no one has enjoyed the sight of a mason rolling down from the roof tops after being shot at as Charlois did." Serajuddaula was the king of the country; Charlois was only a high ranking subject.

From this sarcastic remark one gets an idea of what unimaginable differences were there in the then France. Louis XVth was a pleasure-loving, addicted to useless enjoyments, spendthrift, selfish king. Immense wealth was needed for the satisfaction of his concubines. The wealth that Madame Pompadour and Madame Du Barry enjoyed, that wealth does not fall on the untarnished lot of the wedded queen. Madame Du Barry had a monkey-like Negro butler; he was employed as the governor of an area—Madame's orders! When we hear the descriptions of the pleasure house of Louis, it can be compared with the palace built by the gods for the Pandavas in Indra-prastha—but with what shall we compare the festivities that were held in those temples of pleasure? Money flowed like water—the royal coffer was emptied! The royal coffer was empty, and heart-rending cries from the starving subjects filled the air. The royal coffer was empty—the subjects were crying for food—how then had this luxury

come to the king's court, how was this enjoyment of the senses possible in that heavenly garden—from where did the money for such expensive things come? By misappropriating the livelihood of the starving subjects. By torturing the tortured—by chewing the dry, by burning the burnt, the hair of Du Barry who brought shame to her family was decorated. What about the big men? They did not give even a penny to the royal coffer—they only enjoyed royal munificence. Royal munificence was manifold, infinite, inexhaustible—one took whatever one got, because it was earned only through flattery. But the beneficiaries of royal munificence did not contribute even a penny to the royal coffer. Big men did not pay taxes, the clergy did not pay tax, the officers of the king did not pay tax—only the poor miserable peasantry paid taxes. On top of all this there was the torture of the tax collectors. Michelet says "Tax collection was like a regular warfare. Through it two hundred thousand useless people ravaged the land. This swarm of locusts used to eat up everything, destroy everything. For getting more from the subjects thus exploited cruel rule, severe punishment, slavery in boats, gallows, instruments of torture, etc. became necessary." Royal tax was collected through the system of giving leases. A lessee had the power to realise the share of the king by using weapons and other means of hurting people. They even murdered the subjects for this. On the one hand there were palaces of pleasure, gardens and hunting parties, dances and music, love-making with other men's wives, gaiety and laughter, limitless enjoyment, thoughtlessness—and on the other hand, there were poverty, starvation, disease, slavery in ships of many innocents, gallows, assassination! During the reign of Louis XVth there were these serious differences. These differences were there because of an ugly, impure system of government. Thanks to the severe castigation by Rousseau, that kingdom and that government were uprooted. His spiritual children reduced them to powder.

Sakya Singha and Jesus Christ preached the holy truth on earth. That they are worshipped as gods is well

deserved for this reason. Rousseau is not their equal. It is not a fact that he publicised unadulterated pure truth. He mixed great beneficent, ethical truths, good for humanity, with harmful falsehood; he captured the heart of the French people by making that mixture charming to the people through the magic of his words. On the one hand Rousseau's words were suited to the age, on the other hand he is a true magician of words. Even falsehood which seemingly followed from truth was accepted by the French people as the guide to their life. All Frenchmen became his spiritual children. Thanks to his teaching they brought about the French revolution.

Rousseau's main thesis is that equality is a natural law. All men are equal in the state of nature. Differences arise because of civilization, but because it gives rise to differences, Rousseau thought that civilization was a severe evil to mankind. He also agreed that some natural differences can be discerned between man and man, but even that is due to the fault of civilization—the resultant of man's craving for mundane happiness, attraction for sin and his capacity for very subtle intellectual discernment, are all products of civilization. All men need to do similar physical labour in an uncivilized state; for this their bodies had similar developments; the outcome of the diseaseless body is a diseaseless mind. When in a wild state men used to hunt from forest to forest, sleep under the trees—capable of little power to use language, as a result they did not know anything called verbal differences; they did not know any wish which could not be fulfilled, any desire which could not be satisfied, any hope which could not be realised; they did not understand why they should love this one and not that one; this one is dear, that one is distant; she is my wife, that one is another man's wife—he has thought such a state to be a state of divine bliss and has called mankind to tell them, "See this wonderful spectacle! Compare your contemporary civilization full of misery and sin with this."

Whoever is born as a man is equal to any one who is a man—he is equal in his natural qualities as well as in his right to property. The natural right that the king

has over the land of the earth, the beggar has also this same natural right. Land belongs to everybody—it belongs to no one in particular. When the strong started depriving the weak of their rights, that was the beginning of the establishment of society. The injunction for perpetuating this condition of deprivation is called law.

The man who first marked a plot of land and said "This is mine" became the pioneer of society. If someone threw him out and said "This man is a cheat, you must not hear what he says, the earth does not belong to anyone; the crops produced by it belong to all", he would have done immense good to mankind.

Such words of Rousseau are very dangerous. When Voltaire heard these, he said, all this is the philosophy of the degenerate. Following such words of Rousseau, his spiritual disciple Proudhon said that usurpation is called property.

In the world famous book called *Le Contrat Social* Rousseau made some changes in these views. He refrained from that kind of chanting of the evils of civilization. He said that whereas in a state of nature the good is determined by the simple knowledge of men, in the civilized state it is determined by the additional factors of his sense of justice and ethics. Regarding property he acknowledges the first owner to be the owner. But it is conditional—first, if the land was not owned by anyone before; secondly, if the owner occupies only that much of land which he needs for his own upkeep, and if he does not take anything more than that; thirdly, if the occupation is not merely in name, if occupation is taken on the basis of cultivation, etc., then the occupied land is his property.

The main thesis of the book *Le Contrat Social* is that society is the resultant of the common consent of those who form it. Just as any five businessmen can collect together, bind themselves to some rules, form a joint stock company, so also, according to Rousseau, society, kingdom, government, etc. were made by men for their own good. The conclusion from such words is momentous. Between you and myself there is a contract that you will

plough my land, I shall give you food and clothing, and shall give you some place to live in my house. The day you stop ploughing my land, that very day I will throw you out of my house by the nape of the neck and stop your morsel of food. This will then be in accoding with justice. Similarly if the relationship between the king and his subjects is only contractual, then the subject can tell the oppressive king, "You have broken the contract. You are a king on the promise that you will do good to the subjects; your work is to do good to us, our work is to pay taxes to you and abide by your orders. You are not doing good to us any longer, hence we also will not pay taxes or abide by your orders. You shall have to get down from the jewel-bedecked throne." So, the day, *Le Contrat Social* was publicised, that day the sceptre in the hands of the king of France was broken. The final result of *Le Contrat Social* was the dethronement and execution of Louis XVI. Whatever happened in the French revolution is rooted in this book. The words of incantation for that sacrifice are the words of this book.

In that French revolution the king was gone, the king's relatives were gone, kinghood was gone, the name of the king was obliterated; the class of aristocrats was abolished; the old Christian religion was gone, the clergy was gone; even the names of months, days, etc. were obliterated—in the endless stream of blood let out by the revolution everything was washed away. In course of time things were restored, but, what had been that was not fully revived. France got a new body. A new civilization came into being in Europe—mankind's permanent good was accomplished. Rousseau's mistaken words became the foundation of permanent work, because those mistaken words were preached on due basis of a truth, i.e., equality—the body of that mistake was half built of truth.

The French revolution quieted down, its aim was achieved. But the seed of the mighty tree that Rousseau sowed by saying "Land belongs to all" bore new fruits every day. Even today Europe is full of its fruits. "Com-

munism" is a fruit of that tree. "International" is also a fruit of that tree. I shall give brief accounts of all these.

Usually, both in this country and other countries property belongs to the individual. My house, your land, his tree. But, that there can be no other property than these, is not so. Instead of individual property there can be common property. This earth which maintains all was not created for any particular individual, neither was it created for ten or fifteen land owners. So it is just that everyone should have an equal right to the land. Through the power of the all-impediment-removing capacity of words Rousseau could make this idea acceptable to the world. Gradually, wise, discerning, learned men on the basis of this foundation started propagating ideas of establishing common ownership of all properties whatsoever.

The first opinion is that land and capital, from which further wealth accrues, should be commonly owned by all. In this there was no difference between the rich and the poor; all are to labour equally. All will be equal sharers of wealth. This is true Communism. Its propagators are Owen, Louis Blanc, and Cabet. But unlike the common Communists Louis Blanc does not agree with the view that all should have an equal share in the wealth irrespective of the fact whether they are capable of hard labour or can do only light work, whether they are labourious or idlers. He says that wealth should be divided according to the labour put in. The school of thought which is famous as Saint-Simonism is also of the opinion that it is not necessary that every one should put in equal labour. One will be employed in that kind of labour for which he is suited; one will be employed in that kind of work for which he is fit. Payment will be made in accordance with the importance of the work and the qualities of the worker. There shall be a number of authorities to do all types of supervision work and to determine who is fit for what, to allocate work to persons according to their ability, to determine what reward is to be given for which work. Land and all means of production of wealth are owned by all, etc.

Fourierism advocates another type of common ownership of property. But this community does not opine that the individual cannot own any property. They are even in favour of absolute ownership and rights of inheritance. They say that two thousand men or so will produce wealth after forming themselves into a self-governing commune. All production will be done by such separate communes of men. Each one of the communes will elect its own authorities. There shall be differences in the capital owned. First, a part of the total production will be distributed equally amongst all. Even the one who is not capable of working will get his share. Whatever is left will be distributed amongst the labourers, capitalists, and efficient workers in accordance with some rules. Each shall get according to his qualifications etc.

It is necessary to mention what the late illustrious soul John Stuart Mill has said about inheritance of landed property because this is also included in the philosophy of equality. Mill agrees that the man who earns should have an absolute right on his earning. Whatever one has earned by dint of his own labour, by dint of his qualities, even if it is a huge sum, should be enjoyed by him so long as he lives and he has a right to bequeath his property, according to his wish to anyone after his death. But if he does not bequeath his property to anyone after his death, then no one has any right to enjoy alone the property thus left. The property that Ram has earned can maintain ten thousand people; but because Ram has earned it he has a right to enjoy it depriving nine hundred and ninety others. He has a right to bequeath his property according to his wish either to his son or someone else who will have absolute right over the property thus inherited. But if he does not bequeath his property to any one, why should his son alone be the owner solely on the strength of law? Ownership belongs to the person who earns and not to his son. Where the owner has not left the word that his son should enjoy all, there the son is not the owner, all men of the society have equal rights on that.

But it is the father who brought his son to this earth

full of misery; so, the father should arrange things in such a way that he (the son) does not suffer and can live happily, being well-educated, without being poor. That part of the father's property which is necessary for fulfilling this purpose, the son should get even if there is no bequest. But he has not right to a penny more. Mill says, the other sons do not have a greater right than the illegitimate ones—both of them have a right to the means for the protection of their lives. But all such rights are those of the children. There is no justifiable reason for the relations to have absolute right over all the property of a dead man if he dies without leaving a son. The rest of the property, after reserving that which is necessary for the children, of a man who has children, should rightfully belong to the public. All the property of a childless man should rightfully belong to the public. As a matter of fact in no country of the world, till date, have the laws of inheritance been based on justice. The rules of our *Dharma Sastra* are a bit better than those of England; *Shara* is still better than the Hindu *Dharma Sastra*. But all are full of injustice. Now most men do not attach any importance to these words, and the ignoramus laughs at them. But one day such systems will prevail throughout the world.

The last part of the philosophy of equality is also the product of this memorable soul. Women and men are to be equal. Now only men have a right to good education, scientific knowledge, to be in Government service and to be engaged in different business—why should the women be deprived of these things? Mill says, women folk have a right to all these. That they will not be able to do, that they are not fit to do, such things are only long-standing popular falsehoods. This opinion after being accepted in Europe is bearing fruits. It will take a long time to publicise such words in our country.

Let us recapitulate the main points of the philosophy of equality. Man and man are equal. But this does not mean that all men of all circumstances are equal to all men of other circumstances. There are natural differences; some are weak, some are strong; some are intelli-

gent, some do not have intelligence. As consequences of natural differences there will be social differences ; one who is intelligent and strong is the man who orders ; one who is devoid of intelligence and weak will necessarily execute orders. Even Rousseau has agreed to this. But the essence of the philosophy of equality is that there are social differences which are the results of natural differences, differences more than these are unjust and harmful to mankind. Many of the prevalent political and social systems are the causes of such unnatural differences. If such systems are not rectified, there is no hope for the real progress of mankind. At one place Mill has said, all the good rules of today are corrections of bad rules of earlier times. This is a truism. But full correction is dependent on time. For this reason one should not think that I am a big man because of the qualities of my birth, others are small because of the qualities of their birth. That you have been born in a high family is no quality of yours ; that the other person has been born in a low family is no fault of his. So whatever right you have to the happiness of this world the same right is also enjoined upon the person born in a low family. Do not stand in the way of his happiness ; remember that he is also your brother—your equal. One who has inherited property from his father because of unjust law and by virtue of that adorns himself with titles like *Maharaja of Maharajas* (king of kings) signifying unrestricted strength and power, even he should remember that the Bengal peasant Paran Mandal is his equal, and his brother. Birth is not subject to badness and goodness. He has no other fault. The property that he is enjoying alone, Paran Mandal also has a justifiable right to that.

THIRD CHAPTER

Once the story of Paran Mandal has been introduced, I cannot resist giving a little more detailed account of his miseries. Everyone knows about the wealth of the *Zamindars*, but many of those who are trying to emancipate the

Bengali society by writing in newspapers, by delivering lectures are not fully aware of the plight of the peasantry.

If we do not clarify this disparity while elucidating the philosophy of egalitarianism, our account will remain incomplete. I am constrained to talk about the outcome of dividing the earth—the earth which is nobody's property—among the landlords. While the *Zamindar* is enjoying the reflection of diamonds on the fair limbs of his wife and daughter by the soft light streaming through the coloured-glass windows in his palatial building with seven and half contiguous quarters, Paran Mandal and his son, bare-footed and bare-headed, are driving two emaciated bullocks to pull a blunt plough through knee-deep mud, in the scorching noonday sun. Their heads are almost splitting in this blazing sun of *Bhadra* (August-September), their lungs are cracking because of thirst; they drink mud from the field with cupped hands to quench their thirst; they are nearly at the end of their tether because of starvation, but they cannot go home and eat; this is the time for putting the plough in the field. In the evening they will go home and half fill their bellies with coarse red rice, chillies and salt, served on a broken plate of stone. After that they will lie down either on a torn straw mat or on the bare ground in one corner of the cowshed—mosquitoes do not bite them! Next day they will again go to work in the same knee-deep mud—and while going they will be caught either by the men of the *Zamindar* or by the money-lender and will be made to sit idle on a charge of non-payment of debts; they will not be able to do any work. Or else, at the time of putting the plough to the field the *Zamindar* will snatch away the land. What will they do that year? Starvation—starvation for the whole family.

The peasants have paid the tax-instalment in the month of Paush (December-January) immediately after cutting the paddy. Some paid in full—others remained in arrears. The peasant is expected, after collecting the paddy from the field, winnowing and putting it into the

Gola, to go on time to the fair, sell his produce and go to the *Zamindar's Kachari* to pay his whole year's taxes in the month of *Chaitra* (March-April). *Paran Mandal's* instalment in the month of *Paush* is five rupees; he paid four; he is in arrears by one rupee. On top of this the instalment to be paid in *Chaitra* is three rupees more. He has come to pay in all four rupees. The *Gomosta* sits down to draw up the accounts. After doing so he says, "You are three rupees in arrears from your *Paush* instalment". *Paran Mandal* cries and swears in the name of God (and possibly can or cannot show the receipt). It is likely that the *Gomosta* did not give him any receipt; or, after taking four rupees, he wrote two rupees on the receipt. However, if *Paran* does not agree, he cannot get the final receipt that he has cleared the last instalment in full. If he does not pay what is demanded by the *Gomosta*, he (the *Gomosta*) may make those three rupees thirteen rupees and lodge a complaint. So *Paran Mandal* agrees that his arrears are three rupees. Then the *Gomosta* calculates the interest. The *Zamindar* charges an interest of four annas per rupee. It is four annas for three years, it is four annas for a month. The interest on an arrear of three rupees is twelve annas. *Paran* pays three rupees and twelve annas. But after that come the expenses to be paid to the *Gomosta* for his work. That amounts to two paise per rupee. *Paran Mandal* had a lease of land for thirty-two rupees. So he has to pay one rupee as expenses for keeping accounts. On top of all this there is the payment of *Parbani*. To a share of *Parbani* everyone—the *Naib*, the *Gomosta*, the *Tehshildar*, the *Muhuri*, the *Paik*, the *Piada*—is entitled. In all, from every village a particular earmarked sum of money is collected for this account. This money is divided among all who have a claim to a share in it. *Paran Mandal* had to pay another two rupees on this account.

We agree that such depredations are not committed with the consent of the *Zamindar*. Out of this he does not get anything but the legitimate tax and interest. The rest goes into the stomach of the *Naib* and *Gomosta*. Who is to be blamed for that? The *Zamindar* employs the *Naib*

on the same salary as he pays his gate-man. The *Gomosta's* salary is less than the *Khansama's*. Hence if they do not do such things, how will they ever get through? Though these things do not happen at the behest of the *Zamindar*, yet they are the results of his miserly behaviour. If his men usurp things only from his tenants for the purpose of making themselves richer, how does he lose anything? What is the compulsion for his talking about it at all?

After that came the new year's *Punyaha* in the month of *Asar* (June-July). *Paran* pays two rupees as tax in the instalment of *Punyaha*. That he paid, but that was only the tax. One has to pay something else to the *Zamindar* on the auspicious occasion. He paid even that. Possibly the *Zamindari* is divided into many co-sharers. He had to pay everyone some little something separately. Even that he paid. After that there is the *Naib*—he had to be paid some present. He paid even that. After him (the *Naib*) there are the *Gomosta Mahashayas*. They have their rightful dues—they also got these. Thus the tenant whose funds were exhausted by giving presents was left with dues. The dues will be realised later.

When *Paran Mandal* went home after leaving behind everything that he had, he found that there was no wherewithal for food. In the meanwhile the time for cultivation has come. There are expenses for that. But *Paran* is not afraid. This happens every year. The main hope is the money-lender. *Paran* went to the money-lender. After agreeing to pay one and a half times as interest he bought paddy on credit. He will repay this next year and again become a pauper. The peasant always lives on loans, he always pays one and a half times as interest. This might reduce even the king to a pauper not to speak of the peasant. Possibly the *Zamindar* himself is the money-lender. In the village he has his *Gola* and *Golabari* to store paddy and other things. *Paran* brought paddy from there. The business of such *Zamindars* is not bad. After reducing him to a pauper, he give him a loan on one and a half times interest. Under these conditions the sooner he can misappropriate the tenant's wealth, the more he shall gain.

Every year it is not the same. Some years there is a bumper crop, some years there is none. There is excess of rain, there is draught, there is untimely rain, there is flood, there are the depredations of locusts, there are the plunders of other insects. If the money-lender sees hope for a good crop, he gives loans; or else he does not. The money-lender knows very well that if there is no crop, the peasant will not be able to repay his debts. Then the peasant is without any way out. He and his family die of starvation. His only hopes are then sometimes wild, unedible fruits and roots, or "Relief", or beggary, or only the Lord of creation. Barring a few great souls no Zamindar stands up as someone on whom the tenants can rely in times of peril. Let us take it that that year was a good year. Paran Mandal got the loan and was just able to get by.

Then comes the time for paying the *Bhadra* (August-September) instalment. Paran has nothing. He could not pay anything. *Paik, Piada, Nagdi, Halshana, Kotal* or some great soul bearing a similar title came to remind him of his dues. Possibly unable to do anything, he goes back as a very meek man. Or Paran paid the money after taking a loan. Or else some devil happened to get into Paran's head—he quarrelled with the *Piada*. The *Piada* went back and told the *Gomosta*, "Paran Mandal has called you his brother-in-law". Then three *Piadas* ran to arrest Paran. They went and plucked him off his little patch of soil. As soon as Paran came to the *Kachari*, he heard some very civilised abuses—he also got some high and mediocre things on his body. The *Gomosta* imposed five-times the fine on him. On top of this there is the daily wage of the *Piadas*. The *Piadas* are ordered, "Keep him confined and realise the money". If there is any well-wisher of Paran he rescues him by paying the money. Otherwise Paran stays in the *Kachari* for one day, two days, three days, four days, five days, seven days. Possibly, Paran's mother or brother goes to the police station and lodges complaints. The Sub-Inspector sends a constable for rescuing Paran from confinement. The constable—the lord of this world—comes to the *Kachari*

and sits there in his glory. Paran sits near him and starts weeping before him a little. The constable starts showing some braggadacio—but there is no talk of releasing the confined. He is also on the payroll of the *Zamindar*—twice or thrice he gets *Parbani*, he does not have sufficient strength to fly. That day also he has the sight of the all-happiness-bestowing, supremely sacred, disc of silver. The very sight of this magic disc generates the feeling of happiness—gives rise to reverential and pleasant feelings. He after being pleased with the *Gomosta* goes to the Police station and says, “No one was confined, Paran Mandal is a crook of a man—he was hiding himself under the Tal tree beside the pond—as soon as I called, he came out and made his appearance”. The case is scuttled. It is not a fact that the tenants are forcibly taken away, beaten up, illegally confined in the *Kachari*, fined, only because their tax is in arrears. Such things happen from all sorts of causes. Today Gopal Mandal after paying a little *pranami* to the *Gomosta* has complained that, “Paran does not dine with me”. Immediately Paran is arrested and brought in. Today Nepal Mandal after doing similar invocations complains that, “Paran has shown inclinations towards my sister”—immediately Paran is arrested and confined. Today there came news that Paran’s widowed sister-in-law (brother’s wife) is expecting a baby—immediately men run to get hold of Paran. Today Paran is unwilling to give false witness on the side of the *Zamindar*, immediately, men run to get hold of him.

The *Gomosta Mahashaya* releases Paran, maybe after realising the money from him; maybe after getting his surety; maybe after binding him to payment by instalments; maybe with the hope that some time things will be settled; maybe for fear of the police appearing again; maybe because there is no use in keeping him confined for a long time. Paran comes home and devotes himself to cultivation. There is a good harvest. In the month of *Aghrayan* (October-November) there is the marriage of the grand-daughter of the *Zamindar* or his brother’s son’s first rice-eating ceremony. Two thousand rupees have been

earmarked. Hence there is a levy on the *Mahal*. Every tenant is to pay an additional four annas for every due rupee. That will fetch five thousand rupees. Two thousand will be spent in the first rice-eating ceremony—three thousand will get into the *Zamindar's* coffers.

The tenant who could, paid. *Paran Mandal* is left with nothing—he could not pay. The full five thousand rupees could not be collected from the *Zamindari*. After hearing this the *Zamindar* decided that he himself will set his feet in the *Mahal*. He came—the village was thoroughly sanctified.

Then the *Mandals* brought big black he-goats and tied them to the doors of the *Kachari*. Big *Ruis*, *Katlas*, *Mrigals* started lashing their tails in the courtyard. Rooms were filled with big black brinzals, round potatoes, cauliflower, peas. We need not talk about the curd, milk, ghee, butter. The devotion of the tenants is steadfast, but the stomach of the *Babu* is not like that. Not to speak of the *Babu*, even the *Paiks* and *Piadas* showed symptoms of stomach upset.

But all these are mere trifles. The real thing is that the *Zamindar* had to be given "*Agamani*", "*Nazar*" or "*Salami*". Again, there was an additional levy of two annas per rupee. But every one cannot pay so much. One who could, paid. One who could not, remained confined in the *kachari*, or his dues were set down as being in arrears.

Paran Mandal could not pay. But he had a bumper crop on his farm. The *Gomosta's* eyes fell on that. By spending eight annas as stamp fees, he appealed to the appropriate court to get the powers, of "attachment". The substance of the appeal was, "*Paran Mandal* has not paid his taxes; we want to attach his paddy. But *Paran* is a very troublesome fellow, he has collected people to riot, cause trouble, commit murder and bodily injuries if his paddy is attached. So let *Piadas* be deputed by the court." The *Gomosta* is a simple and good man; all conceivable troubles are *Paran Mandal's* doing. So the *Piada* was appointed by the court. When the *Piada* appeared in the

farmland he was overwhelmed by the charm of the charming silver disc. He stood there and got the paddy of Paran Mandal cut and sent it to the *kachari* of the *Zamindar*. This is what is called "sustenance through attachment".

Paran found that he had lost everything. "I shall not be able to repay the debt of the money-lender; neither shall I be able to pay the taxes of the *Zamindar*, nor shall I be able to put any food into my stomach." For a long time Paran tolerated all this—one cannot live in quiet water by quarrelling with the crocodile. Paran Mandal heard that he could appeal. Paran decided to see his appeal to the end. But that is not easy. The court-house is comparable to the palaces of prostitutes; one with no money has no entrance. One needs the cost of stamps; the fees of pleaders; one must pay the cost of witnesses against the accused, pay for the board of the witnesses; there are presents for the witnesses also; possibly there will be some expenses for the *Amin*. And the *Piada* of the court and the *Amlas* naturally expect something. Paran is a pauper. Yet he appealed to the court after selling his plough, bullocks, utensils. It would have been better if he killed himself by hanging with a rope around his neck.

At once there was a counter appeal from the side of the *Zamindar* that Paran Mandal by defying the orders of the attachment had cut the paddy from his farmland and sold it out. All the witnesses are tenants of the *Zamindar*—so they are willing to be obedient; not because of affection—but because of fear. They all deposed in his favour. *Piada Mahashaya* is a follower of the same path because of the charm of silver. Everyone said, Paran has defied the orders for attachment and sold his paddy after reaping. The *Zamindar's* appeal was decreed, Paran's appeal was dismissed. From this Paran's net gains are: first, he had to pay compensation to the *Zamindar*; secondly, he had to pay the cost of both cases to the *Zamindar*; thirdly, he had to pay from his own pocket the expenses of two litigations.

Paran does not have a single penny; from where could

he pay so much money. If he could sell his land, then he did sell it; otherwise he went to jail; or he absconded and left the country.

We do not want to say that all these means of extortion are inflicted on a particular tenant in a particular year, or, that all *Zamindars* are alike. If that were so, the country could not continue to exist. Paran Mandal is an imaginary person—our intention is to depict the different tortures usually inflicted on the tenants by the tyrannous *Zamindars*, centering our attention on an imaginary tenant. As a matter of fact today one type of extortion is inflicted on one tenant and tomorrow another type on another.

I do not think that I have been able to set forth all the tyrannies of the various sorts of *Zamindars*. It is not possible to draw up an exhaustive list of the different ways through which particular *Zamindars* in particular provinces and at particular times extort money. Everywhere the same rule does not operate; neither is the same rule applicable to all belonging to the same place; there are many who are not subject to any rule whatsoever; they realise whatever they can whenever they like.

Now, it is necessary to say a few words in favour of the *Zamindars*.

First, we have said before that all *Zamindars* are not tyrannous. Day by day the number of tyrannous *Zamindars* is decreasing. There is no tyranny of the well-educated *Zamindars* of Calcutta—whatever is there is there without their knowledge and consent; it is done by the *Naibs* and *Gomostas*. There are many well-educated *Zamindars* in the *Mofussil* also; there too the conditions are similar. The tyranny of the big *Zamindar* is not that excessive—in many big houses we do not find any evidence of their being tyrannous. Only in ordinary houses there are excesses of torture. The possibilities of a person whose income from his *Zamindari* is a lakh of rupees feeling strongly attracted towards various methods of extortion is less; but one to whom not even twelve hundred rupees comes in twelve months from his *Zamindari*,

one who has to maintain some outward show despite this low income, naturally feels strongly inclined towards collecting some more money by hook or by crook. Again, the depredations of the *Pattanidar*, *Darpattanidar*, *Ijara-dar* are worse than that of those *Zamindars* who themselves collect taxes from their tenants. We have used only the word *Zamindar* for the sake of brevity. We should understand by the word *Zamindar* all those who get revenue from the land. The different categories of retainers take *Ijara Pattani* from the *Zamindar*, make excessive profit for themselves after paying the *Zamindar* his due from his *Zamindari*; therefore, they have to grab everything that the tenants have. The creation of intermediary *Taluks* is extremely harmful to the tenants.

Secondly, the oppressions which we have described are mostly done without the knowledge of the *Zamindars*, sometimes these are done by the *Naibs* and *Gomostas* even contrary to the wishes of the *Zamindars*. Many do not even know that their tenants are being oppressed at all.

Thirdly, there are many *Zamindars* whose tenants are not good. They do not pay taxes without oppression. If the *Zamindar* has to realize all the taxes through the court of law, he will ruin himself. But it should be mentioned here that the tenants do not develop a rebellious attitude, if they have not been oppressed first.

We do not agree with those who blame only the *Zamindars*. Many good deeds are being done by the *Zamindars*. That in the villages schools are being opened, that people without any distinction of caste or creed or income are getting education in their villages is due to the *Zamindars*. At many places the *Zamindars* by building hospitals, roads, guesthouses, etc., are doing good to the common man. Those who alone speak to the rulers on behalf of the people of our country are the *Zamindars'* British Indian Association—a society of the *Zamindars*. Therefore, always to blame the *Zamindars* will be an act of injustice. That a few people belonging to this community oppress their tenants is a shame to them. The onus for the removal of this blemish lies only in the hands of the *Zamindars* themselves. If there are five bro-

thers in a family and if two of them are bad characters, then the other three should take care to correct the two recalcitrant brothers. Our advice to the community of *Zamindars* is that they should also adopt a similar line of action. We are writing this essay to tell that. We are not informing the officers of the government, we are not telling the public. Our appeal is before the *Zamindars*. This is not impossible for them to accomplish. Out of all punishments, the loss of the sympathy of one's own community, the insults inflicted by one's own community are the most effective. Most of the bad men who refrain from theft do so because they are afraid of being hated as thieves by their neighbours. The force of such punishment is more potent than that of law. For the *Zamindars* such modes of punishment are in their own hands. If there is a fear of being hated, insulted and ostracised from the society by fellow *Zamindars* then the roguish *Zamindars* will leave their villainy.

FOURTH CHAPTER

How have the peasants of this country arrived at such a miserable condition? How has this wide division in the society come into being? In order to explain the philosophy of equality we are going to talk about this in some detail.

It must be acknowledged that the peasants of Bengal have not come to this miserable state of affairs in a day or two. The backwardness of the common man in India is an age-old story; the miserable plight of the Indian peasantry is almost as old as Indian civilization. There is a saying in the West that Rome was not built in a day. The misery of the peasants of this country has not just taken place during the past one hundred years. We shall try to examine today why the subjects of India are in this abject condition from time immemorial.

That progress in knowledge is the king-pin and the measure of civilization is the essence of what Mr Buckle has written. Buckle thinks that there cannot be any

progress in morals if there is no progress in knowledge. We do not agree with this ; but we must acknowledge that the cause of civilization is progress of knowledge. Without progress of knowledge there cannot be any progress of civilization. Knowledge is not immaculately conceived ; it is to be acquired through hard labour. If no one engages himself in the cultivation of learning, knowledge cannot spread in the society. But leisure is essential for the pursuit of learning. Before we can think of learning, there must be sufficient provision for our stomachs ; no one can pursue knowledge while starving. If everyone is busily engaged in the search for food all the time, there will be no time left for the pursuit of knowledge. So what is necessary for the foundation of civilization is a section of the society free from physical labour and yet able to meet their daily needs. Others will work while they will pursue learning. If the workers produce only for themselves, such a thing will not happen ; because what they produce will go to maintain the workers themselves, there will remain no surplus for anyone. But if they produce more than what they need for themselves, there will remain an amount in excess after paying for their maintenance. With that surplus who do not do any physical labour will be maintained and will be able to pursue learning. Only then will there be knowledge. Whatever surplus there is after meeting the daily needs of the producer may be called saving. Therefore, a necessary condition for the rise of civilization is social saving.

In some countries there is social saving while in others there is none. The countries where it happens becomes civilized. What are the reasons for this kind of primitive accumulation of wealth in different countries ? We can mention two such reasons in brief. The first cause is the fertility of the soil. It is easy to get crops from the land of a country where the soil is fertile, so that after providing for the maintenance of the workers, there will be some saving. The second reason is the warmth or coldness of the country. The effect of climate is two-fold. First, the people living in warm countries need less food ; in the cold countries people need more food. These

things depend on some natural laws. In this short essay there is no space for dilating on them. In this article we are strictly following Buckle; the inquisitive reader may read his book. Doubtless, social wealth will accumulate quickly in a country where the people need less food. The second effect of warmth, Buckle says, is that, because of the excess of heat, men do not need much energising food. The people of cold countries need more energising food for keeping their bodies warm. The body's warmth is the chemical result of the mixture of the oxygen which we inhale and the carbon inside our bodies. Therefore, that food which has more carbon in it is more warmth producing. There is more carbon in non-vegetarian food. So non-vegetarian food is especially needed by the people of cold countries. In a warm country the need for a non-vegetarian diet is comparatively less—the need for vegetarian food is greater. Vegetarian food is more easily available; whereas the hunt for animals is more strenuous, and the edible animals are not easily available. In this way the food in warm countries is comparatively cheaper. Because food is cheaper, there is a quick saving.

India is a warm country; and the land there is also fertile. So there was a possibility of rapid accumulation of wealth in India. This is the reason why civilization thrived in India in very ancient times. Because of an abundant wealth one section of people could lay down physical labour and engage itself in intellectual pursuits. Indian civilization is the record of their achievements in the field of knowledge and its propagation. The reader must have understood that we are talking about the Brahmins.

But this proto-civilization is the root cause of the miserable plight of the Indian subjects. The very reasons because of which there was an untimely birth of civilization were also responsible for thwarting the progress of that civilization—the common man was reduced to a miserable existence because of the exact same rules. The sky was thus covered with clouds even at dawn. A young plant should not bear untimely fruit.

With an accumulation of social wealth, the society divided itself in two sections. One section went on doing labour; and the other section did not work. The second section did not do any labour because they did not need to do any; they were maintained by whatever surplus the first section produced. Only those who did not do any labour had ample leisure; so they had a monopoly on education, thought, etc. He who thinks gets education; that is, he whose intellect gets sharpened, becomes more competent than others and becomes more powerful than others. Thus they could become most powerful in the society. Those who depend only on their labour work under them. There was thus a division in the very beginning. Such a division is natural, one cannot do away with it; and it will not do any good to eliminate this distinction altogether, either.

The labourers are in fact immensely benefited by those who live by their intellect, by those who have a thirst for knowledge; they get a part of the labourers' produce as their remuneration; whatever produce is left after catering to the needs of the workmen goes into their hands. In this way surplus wealth goes into the hands of the intellectuals. Thus the total produce of the country is divided in two parts—one part goes to the labourer and the other part goes to those who live by their intellect. The first part is "wage of labour" and the second part is "profit" from business.* We shall use the words "wage" and "profit". "Profit" remains in the houses of those who live by their intellect. The labourers get no other part of the produce but their wages. Whatever may be the number of workers, they will get only that part of the total produce which is wage and shall not get any part of the profit. The labourers get only wages and do not get any part of the profit. Whatever may be the number of workers, they will get only their wages from the total produce and shall not get even a penny from the "profit".

* We should consider "Land revenue" and "interest" as included under this. For brevity's sake we have not referred to revenue and interest. (Bankim's own footnote.)

Let us assume that the country's total produce is one crore of rupees (ten million rupees). Out of this 50 lakhs (five million) go for wages and the remaining fifty lakhs go as profit. Let us also assume that there are 25 lakh workers. Then fifty lakhs of rupees will be divided among twenty-five lakh workers, each worker will get two rupees. Let us assume that suddenly another twenty-five lakh people appear in the field. Then there will be fifty lakh workers. Those fifty lakhs of rupees will then be divided among fifty lakhs of people. They will not get a single farthing from the "profit", so nothing more than fifty lakhs of rupees will be divided among those fifty lakhs of people. Every worker will get one rupee instead of two rupees. But they used to get two rupees as that was enough for their maintenance. So now they will have difficulties in maintaining themselves; they will be miserable for want of bare sustenance.

If the production increased by one crore of rupees with the induction of the new men, there would not have been any hardship. One crore of rupees would have been distributed as wages instead of fifty lakhs. Then in spite of an addition of men they would have two rupees per head.

So we see that the increase of population is very harmful to the workers. If increase in population is commensurate with an increase of wealth, the workers do not suffer. If increase of wealth surpasses increase in population then the workers have better days—take for example England and America. But if neither of these happens and there is only an increase in population outstripping the increase in wealth, then the workers are miserable. In India such a thing happened even in the very beginning.

Increase of population is a natural law. Many children are born of one man and one woman. Each of their offspring gives birth to many children. So the misery of man is almost inherent in his very nature. There is a danger of such miseries befalling every society. But there is a way out. The real way out is to increase wealth. But very often the increase of subjects far outstrips the in-

crease of wealth. There are many impediments to an adequate increase in wealth. So we shall have to take some other means. There are only two ways open to us. One way out is emigration. In some countries there is a want of food, in others there is a surplus. If some people of the countries belonging to the first category go to countries belonging to the second, no harm will be done on either side. This is the way that England has benefited immensely. Many people of England are now living in America, Australia and other parts of the world. Because of this there is prosperity in England and something good has come to the colonies also.

The second way out is suppression of the desire to marry. This is the best way. If everyone marries, there is no limit to the increase of the number of subjects. But if some remain unmarried, there is diminution in the increase of the population. The country where the people are accustomed to a high standard of living, where one needs many things in abundance in order to live, things which are hard to get, there the people suppress their desire to marry. If they do not find the ways and means to maintain their families, they do not marry.

In India neither of these courses could be taken. Warmth leads to lethargy of the body, and makes people disinclined to labour. To go out to foreign countries needs enthusiasm, zeal, planning and hard labour. Even nature has acted against her. India is locked between unsurpassable mountains and hazardous seas. We have not heard of any other Hindu colony except the islands of Java and Bali. Such meagre colonies of a vast and ancient country like India should not be counted as important at all.

From the point of view of suppressing the desire to marry the conditions in India are still worse. Even if you scratch the land you can get crops, and no matter whether your body is well-nourished or not, with that food you can satisfy your hunger and continue to live. As the climate is warm there is no need for much clothing either. So life on a low standard of living is easy. Under the circumstances no one is afraid of the burden of maintaining a family. So the subjects refused to suppress their desire

to marry. As no way to put a check to the increase of the subjects was adopted, the population increase went on unabated. As a result with the rise of civilization, the Indian workers began to live a miserable life. The fertility of the land and the warm climate—the two reasons for the rise of civilization became the causes of the miseries of the common man. Both are results of immutable natural law.

This is the cause of the beginning of the miseries of the worker. But once decline sets in it leads to more decline. The increase in the miseries of the workers was proportionate to its discrepancy from the other class of the society. First, there was the difference of wealth and as a result of that came the difference of rights. As the worker went down, the power of the intellectuals over them grew. The result of over concentration of power is increase of oppression. This over-lordship is the basis of the *Smriti Sastras*—the *Sastras* which give sanction to the oppressions of the *Sudras*. This difference is unnatural. This is the cause of evil.

Three important conclusions can be derived from what we have already said.

The effects of the causes of the decline of the workers are threefold. The first effect is decline of wages. Its other name is poverty. This leads to an increase in disparities.

Secondly, if there is decrease in wages, there is a need to do more labour; because the decrease will have to be made good by labour. This leads to the destruction of leisure. Because of the want of leisure, there is a decline in the pursuit of knowledge. So the second result is ignorance. This also leads to the widening of the differences.

The third effect is, the increase of the power of, and oppression by, those who live by their intellect. The other name for this is slavery. This is the last word in social schism.

Poverty, ignorance and slavery.

Once these effects came into being in a country like India they tended to become permanent in accordance with natural law.

It has been shown that the accumulation of wealth is the root cause of civilization. I do not think it would be an exaggeration if I say the desire for wealth is the cause of the advancement or civilization. The root cause of social advancement are two traits of the human mind ; first his desire to know, and second his desire to produce wealth. The first desire is great and desirable, but the second is notorious as a self-seeking and mean desire. But Lecky in his *History of Rationalism* says that out of the two desires, man's desire for wealth has proved to be more beneficial to men than the other desire. As a matter of fact desire for knowledge is to be found rarely, while desire for wealth is universal ; because of this it is comparatively more fruitful. If the country's produce is sufficient to maintain its people, it does not lead to a decline in the desire to acquire more wealth in the society. New desires for new kinds of happiness crop up ceaselessly. What appeared to be unnecessary before appears to be necessary afterwards. Once one gets that which one wants, one feels the need for other things. Want leads to endeavour, endeavour leads to success. Thus happiness and bliss are increased. The desire to live in happiness and affluence is absolutely necessary for the advancement of civilization. Once the desire to get physical happiness tends to be satisfied, there arise the desires for knowledge, for the enjoyment of poetry and literature and as a result different branches of human knowledge come into being. Man's will to work weakens when his desire to be happy is at a low ebb. There is no desire to improve, and there is no caring about that improvement either. As a result, in a country where food is available cheaply the different incentives to check the increase of the population become inert. Hence "satisfaction", which has received unlimited eulogium from the poets, is especially harmful for social advancement ; this inclination about which poets have sung is poisonous for social life.

An attitude of satisfaction, full of evil consequences for the people, easily came to India in accordance with natural law. In this country because of the excessive heat it is not possible to stand hard work for a long time at

one go. Because of this, unwillingness to work becomes a habit. There are also many more reasons for this habit. It has already been pointed out that because the people of the warm countries do not need much energising food they do not do many things like hunting, etc. One has to be an adept in courageous, hard and dextrous activities if one is to eat by killing wild animals. One of the bases of European civilization is this old habit of theirs. So on the one hand there is no necessity for labour, on the other hand there is no desire to put in labour; the results of all this are laziness and a lack of enthusiasm. Habitual laziness and lack of enthusiasm is called satisfaction. Once the Indians fell into abject misery, they remained satisfied with it. There has been no improvement ever since because of the lack of enthusiasm. The edible animals do not enter the sleeping lion's mouth of their own accord.

We find many theories on satisfaction if we go into the ancient history of India. Detachment from earthly happiness has been recommended both by the Hindus and the Buddhists. The Brahmin, the Buddhist, the social and religious legislators, the philosophers—all alike have told the Indians that earthly happiness is something despicable. The European clergy also propagated the futility of earthly happiness. That Europe after the fall of the Roman civilization lived for a thousand years in a state wherein man's earthly happiness remained uncared for is the result of such teachings. But in Italy there was a resurrection of ancient Greek literature and philosophy; and as a result of that education slowly a diminution of disgust with earthly happiness set in. Progress in civilization followed. In Europe an attitude of detachment could not strike strong roots. In India this has become, as it were, a second nature of men. A tree strikes roots in a land suited to it. The conditions in this country are at the roots of the propagation of the *Dharmasastric* philosophy of world-and-life negation; and because of the teachings of the *Dharmasastras* the natural roots of this philosophy of withdrawal got strengthened.

Owing to this, different were the fruits that Europe and India bore. The European people after rising from

their slumber engaged themselves in the pursuit of earthly happiness and endeavoured to do away with the social schisms. The result of this is happiness, prosperity, and progress of civilization. The Indian people continued to sleep; social differences attained perpetuity. The result of this is decline.

Not only did the workers' miserable plight become permanent but also because of that the sense of dignity in the other class of society got destroyed. Just as a drop of citrous juice curdles a pot of milk so also the miseries of the lower class leads to the degradation of the classes.

(a) The ancient Aryans were divided into four classes according to their vocations—*Brahmin*, *Kshatriya*, *Vaishya*, *Sudra*. Division within division. *Sudra* is the lowest class. It was of their miseries that I have been talking so long. *Vaishyas* are engaged in business. Business depends on the abundance of the produce of the labouring class. A country where nothing over and above the bare necessity is produced, there business does not thrive. If business does not increase there is a decline in the dignity of the businessmen. Human want is the basis of business. If we do not want anything produced in other countries then no one will bring goods from there and sell them to us. So in a country where the peoples are without any want and are satisfied with the produce of their own labour there business cannot thrive. Someone may ask: was there formerly no business in India? Of course, there was. There was; but the immense possibilities that a vast fertile and rich country like India provided in the ancient times for prosperous business were never utilised. There were other reasons for loss of business, for example—the dictum of the *Dharmasastras*, the habitual lack of enthusiasm in the society, etc. It is needless to refer to those things in this article.

(b) The *Kshatriyas* are either kings or kings' men. If history has taught us any definite lesson, it is this: if the people are not energetic and vigilant about the governance of their country then the quality of those who govern does not improve; that leads them to their degradation instead. If no one raises any objection, those who are in charge of

government can easily pursue their personal and selfish whims. As soon as one becomes a self-seeker, he gets busy in the pursuit of his own happiness only, is indolent in his work, and corrupt. So, in a country where the people are lifeless, docile, unambitious, and lazy, there the character of those who are in charge of government deteriorates. Wherever the common man lives in misery and is in want of food and clothing, is always busy in procuring his food and is content with that alone, there the people are lifeless, docile, unenthusiastic, and are incapable of raising any objection. The low castes of India, oppressed by schisms are in that condition. That is why the kings of India starting from the strong, righteous, and ascetic characters as described in the *Mahabharata* slowly degraded themselves into the weak, lusty, womanising, lazy kings of the middle ages as described in the poetries and dramas of that age and obliterated themselves in the hands of the *Musalman*s. The kings of the countries where the conditions of the common man are good do not suffer this miserable plight. If they see that the king is not doing his duties, the subjects can be furious with him, and as a matter of fact they do become so. Mutual vigilance is the cause of progress in both. The governors are always cautious of creating unnecessary discontent. And this is not the only benefit. Through an adverse criticism of the work of the government, many good mental qualities are created and nurtured generally. In the absence of this these things go into oblivion. Because of the slavery of the *Sudras*, the *Kshatriyas* lost their wealth as well as their sense of justice. There was improvement in the nature of the rulers in Rome because of the opposition of the plebeans; in England similar things happened because of the opposition of the commons.

(c) *Brahmin* : The power of *Kshatriyas* increased because of the degradation of the lower class and then went into oblivion. This, too, was the lot of the *Brahmins*. As the mental qualities of the other *Varnas* got adversely affected, their minds became more and more bogged down in rituals. Weakness leads to increasing fear. Pseudo-religion is the product of fear; this world is controlled by

powerful and evil-doing gods. This is the belief of pseudo-religion. So as the other three *Varnas* lost their mental power, they were more and more tormented by pseudo-religion; *Brahmins* are the priests of pseudo-religion; and their power increased. Differences widened. The *Brahmins* entangled the *Kshatriyas*, *Vaisyas* and *Sudras* in the ever-expanding net of their *Sastras* and rituals. The flies got caught in the net—they even lost their power to move. But even then the net of the spider did not end. There is no end to the prescriptions. Everything beginning from the laws of government, punishment, treatises and war, to ablution, sleeping, clothing, in life were governed by the codes produced by the *Brahmins*. “You must lie down the way we ask you to, eat the way we ask you to, sit down the way we ask you to, walk the way we ask you to, talk, laugh, cry, the way we ask you to. Even your birth and death cannot take place in contravention of what we have said; if it happens, do penance and pay us.” This is the intricacy of the net. But if you want to delude others, you yourself get deluded; for while you talk of delusions you get used to it. You are to show to others that you believe in what you want others to believe; if you continue for some time in your pose that you believe something then you yourself start believing in that thing. The net with which the *Brahmins* got the whole of India entangled, entangled them too. It has been proved by history that if there is unnecessary restriction to the pursuit of individual wishes, it leads to the downfall of society. Out of all the causes that I have mentioned for the backwardness of the Hindu society, this one is still continuing with its full vigour. Because of this both those who are bound and who bind are equal sufferers. Because the *Brahmins* got themselves caught in the net of rules and rituals, the progress in their intelligence did not blossom. The *Brahmins* composed *Ramayan*, the *Mahabharat*, the *Grammar of Panini*, *Shankhya* philosophy, etc., were proud of the love affairs of *Vasabadatta*, *Kadambari*, etc. Towards the end even that power was lost. The mind of the *Brahmin* became a desert.

So the poison of discrimination is one of the chief causes of the backwardness of the Indian people.

FIFTH CHAPTER

All men have equal rights—this is the philosophy of egalitarianism. I have already mentioned the discord between the landlord and the peasant as the first instance of the violation of egalitarianism. The second instance is the social distance between men and women.

All men have equal rights. Women are also human beings, so they also should have equal rights with men. That women should have the same rights to work as men have is just. Why shouldn't they have the same rights? Some may reply that there is a natural difference between men and women; men are strong, women are weak; men are courageous, women are faint-hearted; men are tough, women are soft; so on and so forth; so wherever there is a natural difference, there should be a difference in the rights because one cannot have a right to the work which one is incapable of doing.

For the time being it will suffice if I briefly indicate only two answers to this. First, we do not agree that natural differences imply a difference in the matter of rights. If we think that it is reasonable, we shall be cutting away the very roots of the philosophy of equality. Let it be noted that just as there are natural disparities between men and women so there are also natural differences between the Englishmen and the Bengalis. The Englishmen are strong, the Bengalis are weak; the Englishmen are courageous, the Bengalis are timid; the Englishmen can stand strain, the Bengalis are tender; and so on and so forth. If these natural differences justify differences in rights then why do we raise so much hue and cry when we see a difference in the rights enjoyed by the Englishmen as against the Bengalis? If it is just that women should be slaves and men masters, it is also just that Bengalis should be slaves and the Englishmen masters.

Secondly, most of the differences in the rights of men and women as we observe today are not based on real natural differences. Whatever is there is so because of the fault of the social rules. The aim of egalitarianism is to correct those social rules. This has been beautifully shown in the discourses of the distinguished John Stuart Mill. We need not repeat those things here.*

In all countries women are slaves to men. Even in the countries where the women are not confined to their homes, they are dependent on men ; and they are to abide by the orders of men and always endeavour to please them.

Though this custom is prevalent in all countries from time immemorial yet there are social thinkers in America and England today who are opposed to this. They are the egalitarians. They are of the opinion that men and women should have equal rights everywhere. Women should have rights in all the things in which men have rights. Men can enter service and join business. Why should women not be allowed to do the same? Why shouldn't women become members of the State and Legislative Assemblies when men can? Women is supremely the wife of man ; why should she be his slave ?

The extent to which women are subjected to men in Europe and America is not even one hundredth of the degree to which they are subjected in our country. Our country is a country of subjugation ; seeds of all types of subjugation are sown here ; they get a fertile soil and grow specially well. In other countries the common man is not so much under the rulers as he is there ; in other countries the illiterates are not to follow so closely whatever the literate may order them to do as they must do here ; in other countries the common men are not so much down-trodden by the priests as they are under the Brahmins here. The manner and extent to which the poor are subjected to the rich is not so cruel in other countries as it is here. The way women abide by the orders of men is not so oppressive in other countries as it is here.

* Subjection of Women. (Bankim's own footnote.)

Here women are like birds in a cage; whatever you teach them, they will repeat. If you feed them, they will eat, or, else, they will go without food (observe *Ekadashi*). Husband, i.e., man is the very image of God. Why the very image of God? It has been said in the *Sastras* that he is supreme among the Gods. The slavery of women has gone so far that the ideal wife Draupadi could, with pride, tell Satyabhama how she served even the other wives of her husband just to please him.

This Aryan *Dharma* of devotion to husband is a beautiful thing; because of this the Aryan home is as blissful as heaven itself. None is against a wife's devotion to her husbands; the egalitarians only object to the slavery of wives to their husbands' whims and also to the contention that in most matters of this earth men and women should not have equal rights.

The terrible discord between men and women that exists in our country has to some extent stirred the minds of our countrymen and there are now movements to do away with some of the discriminations. These are:

1st. Men are to be necessarily educated; but women remain uneducated.

2nd. If the wife of a man dies, he can marry again. But once a woman becomes a widow, she has no right to marry again; rather she has to sacrifice all her happiness and amusements and live for the rest of her life as a woman ascetic.

3rd. Man can go anywhere he pleases; but a woman cannot cross the four walls of her home.

4th. Women have no right to marry again even after the death of their husbands; but men take other wives even when one wife is alive.

1. Even the common man's attitude towards the first problem has changed to some extent. Everyone agrees that the daughters should be educated a little. But almost nobody thinks of why women should not also, like men, learn literature, mathematics, science, philosophy, etc.? Those who feel like drinking poison if their sons fail in the MA examination, feel very happy and contented if their daughters can finish the first primer. They

do not even once think their daughters should, like their sons, get their MA degree too? If someone asks them any question like this, many will think he is being frivolous. Some will ask a counter question; what will the daughter do by getting such higher education? Will she take up service? If the egalitarians in reply say: "Why should she not join service?", most probably at that they will exclaim: "God have mercy on us". Some clever men may answer, we cannot get a job for our son, how shall we find out, in addition, a job for a daughter? Those who think that education is not meant merely for earning one's livelihood can say: "Through what means can we educate our daughters like our sons? Where are the educational institutions for girls?"

As a matter of fact, in Bengal, nay in the whole of India, there is even now no means to impart education to the women in the same way in which men get education. That this doctrine of the egalitarians has not flowered even now in this country is sufficiently testified by the fact that men pay only lip service to women's education. If the society feels some real wants, it tries to meet them. If the society wants something, that something is brought into being. If the Bengalis were really keen upon educating their womenfolk, some ways would have been devised.

There are two ways for doing it. First, separate institutions for women—secondly, arrangement for the education of women in the institutions meant for men.

But the very mention of the second will infuriate the Bengalis. They will insist without any hesitation in their minds that if women go to the institutions meant for men they are sure to behave like prostitutes. Doubtless, the girls will be damned; and the majority of the boys will become lascivious.

It is true, that if we take recourse to the first way out, these objections will not be valid; but even then there will be no dearth of objections. Who will look after the children, if the girls go to study in women's colleges? Who will do the household work? The Bengali girl becomes a wife and a mother at the age of four-

teen. Whatever she can learn by the time she is thirteen years old is all that she can do. But even that is not possible—because how will a thirteen year old girl or wife belonging to a family go out to schools and colleges with books in her hands to study?

We are not going to meet these objections now. We want to say only that if you are egalitarians, you cannot advise the introduction of partial and piecemeal equality till you are prepared to bring about complete equality in all aspects and spheres of life. The social philosophy envisaged by the egalitarians is an integrated whole. If men and women have equal rights in all matters, it follows that to look after their children and to suckle their babies are not the exclusive and only duties of women, or that such things are the sole responsibilities of the mother alone. What is called household work and duty will be shared equally between men and women if there is equality. One person will be deprived of education because of her preoccupation with the household work and the other person will be able to pursue his education undisturbed—this is not in consonance with the principle of equality, irrespective of whether such habits are natural or not. Moreover, that men can go about anywhere without hindrance while women can move freely nowhere is never in accordance with the sense of equality. Because there are disparities in such spheres, there are inequalities in matters relating to education. Disparity breeds further disparities. One who is degraded once, slides down to still further degraded positions.

Let us try to discuss this from another point of view.

Should women get education? Possibly everyone will say: "It is justified".

We may then ask, why is it justified? No one will say because of jobs.* The well-educated men will generally say that women should learn morals and pursue knowledge to enrich their minds and for this they should get education.

We may ask why should men be educated? The

* The egalitarians will say even for jobs also. (Bankim's own footnote.)

long-eared indigenous asses will say, for jobs; but we need not take them into account. Others will say that men should be educated for being moral, for acquiring knowledge and for sharpening their intellect. Even if there is any other need, it is secondary and not primary. The primary reasons, however, are equally applicable to both men and women.

So we have to accept the equal rights of men and women to education. Everyone must agree to this equality, or, there must be some flaw in the above argument. If you agree to equality in this sphere, why don't you agree to equality in other spheres as well? Why don't you agree to equality in matters of rearing children, travelling freely, or doing household work? If you agree to equality, you shall have to extend it to all spheres.

Out of the four social discords that we have mentioned, the second concerns widow-marriage. The question whether widow-marriage is good or bad is a different question. This is not the place for discussing that. But we may say that if someone asks us whether women's education is good or bad, whether all women should get education, we shall at once answer, women's education is very good; all women should get education; but we shall not give such categorical answers if someone asks questions on widow-marriage. We shall say widow-marriage is neither good nor bad; that every widow should get married is never good, but it is good that all widows should have a right to marry if they so wish. The wife who is devoted to her husband and loves her husband never wants to marry again; even among people where widow-marriage is prevalent those who are pure at heart, devoted to their husbands, affectionate, never marry again after the death of their husbands. But if a widow, whether she is a Hindu or some other religionist, intends to marry after the death of her husband, she should have every right to do so. Here we may say that if a man has the right to marry a second time, only then has a wife the right to marry after her husband's death; but we may ask at the same time : should a man at all

take a second wife after his first wife's death? Should and should not are different issues; there is nothing called should or should not in this. Every man has a right to pursue his own inclination so long as it does not do any harm to others. So both the widow and the widower have equal right to marry again.

The widow does have a right to marry. But this ethical principle has not been generally accepted even today in this country. Those who agree to this because of their knowledge of English, or because of the requests of Vidya-sagar, the great soul, and the *Brahmo Samaj* do not practise it. Those who agree on principle to widow-marriage refuse to be courageous enough to go forward with the marriages of widows within their own homes, even of those widows who are willing to marry. The reason for this is fear of the society. That is why this ethical principle has not been accepted by the society. One can understand why other egalitarian principles have not been accepted; men are the legislators of the society; they think that their position is threatened by some ideas of equality. Despite this it is not easy to comprehend why this particular idea of widow-marriage has not as yet entered our social life. This is not difficult to achieve; it is not harmful to anyone and it increases the happiness of many. Even then there is no sign of its being accepted by the society. It seems that the reason for this is the insurmountable barrier of the fixed ways of the people.

There is another thing. Many think that because of eternal widowhood the Hindu woman is so firmly devoted to her husband that she finds it immoral to wish the contrary. Every Hindu wife knows that all her happiness will vanish with her only husband. That is why she has inexhaustible devotion for her husband. According to the reasonings of this group, that is why there is so much of domestic and marital bliss in a Hindu home. Let us accept this as true. But if that be so, why is the rule unidirectional? If the eternal widowhood of the widow is good to the society, why don't we legislate for the eternal widowerhood of the widower? There is no way left for your wife after your death; that is why your wife loves you so much; so, if

your wife dies you too will be left with no way out ; then you also will love her more. And marital happiness, domestic bliss will increase two-fold. But why is this rule not applicable in your case ? Why do you have this rule only for your helpless wife ?

You are the legislator, man, so you have everything your own way. You have the strength, so you can be oppressive. But let it be known to you that this is a very serious, unjust disparity, full of bad consequences and against *Dharma*..

3.* But out of all the oppressions of men and the various disparities that exist between man and woman, there is nothing more cruel, reprehensible, and immoral than the third proposition mentioned above, i.e., our practice of keeping women confined to their homes like animals in an animal house. We shall move freely in heaven and earth like the *Chatak* bird ; but they shall remain confined to one and a half *Katha* of land like someone kept in a cage. They shall be deprived of most of the happiness, enjoyment, education, fun and whatever is good on this earth. Why ? The order of man.

Though most of the well-educated men now agree that this system is immoral and harmful yet they do not endeavour to cross its barriers. The reason for this is fear of humiliation. Others will see with their earthly eyes my wife, my daughter. What an ignominy ! What a shame ! But that you keep your wife, your daughter confined like animals in a zoo, that is not humiliating ? Isn't that a disgrace ? If you do not feel these, I am ashamed of your sense of dignity and honour !

May I ask you: what right have you to oppress them because of the demands of your sense of humiliation and shame ? Were they born just for defending your honour, to be considered as your furniture and utensils ? Your sense of honour and humiliation is everything, their happiness and sorrow are nothing ?

I know, you have reduced Bengali girls to such a state that now they do not take this torture as something which

* Bankim has not numbered the second proposition when he discussed it. The reader must have noted that he mentioned it only in words.

they should feel miserable about. There is nothing to wonder at in this. If you make a man habituated to remaining half-fed, in the long run he will be satisfied with being half-fed, he will not feel miserable for want of food. But that does not make your cruelty forgiveable. Whether they are willing or unwilling, you have deprived them of their happiness and education, and for that you will be eternally damned.

There are some ignoramuses who do not merely raise these objections. They say if the women move about in society freely, they will develop bad habits and the bad-charactered men will get opportunities to seduce them. If you say to them, look at the European and other civilized societies where the respectable family women are moving about in society, freely, is that causing any harm? To this they reply, in those societies women are more immoral and subject to bad habits than the Hindu women.

For keeping women moral, it is necessary that they should be kept confined to cages; we cannot tolerate such humiliation to Hindu women. They will lose their sense of morality if they mix with men in the society, as soon as they come in contact with a man, they will sacrifice all their sense of dignity and run after him; the sense of morality of the Hindu women is not like water in a piece of cloth. And that *Dharma* which is like water in a piece of cloth is not worth keeping. Its absence or presence will not make any difference. What is the need for taking so much trouble to keep that *Dharma*? Get that uprooted and lay the foundation for something new in its place.

4. We have already mentioned the fourth discrimination, i.e., man's right to polygamy. It is not necessary to write much on that. The Bengalis have now especially understood that such a right is immoral. It is easy to understand that in such cases the intention of the social reformers is not to increase the rights of women; but to curtail the rights of men; because neither men nor women have any moral right to marry many times.* No one will

* It may be in accordance with morality only very rarely. For example, in the case of a son-less king, or someone whose wife is afflicted with diseases like leprosy. I have used "may be", because if we agree to this we shall have to have similar laws for man also.

say that women should have the same right as men in contracting many marriages at the same time; everyone will say that just like women, men too have a right to marry only once. So wherever the right is in accordance with morality, there egalitarianism extends that right; wherever the right is not in accordance with morality, there it curtails that right and narrows its applicability. The effect of egalitarianism can never be immoral. The whole of morality is based on the dual principles of equality and individual responsibility.

At present the attention of the Bengali society has been drawn to these four discords. When there is no redress for the most reprehensible things, we cannot hope that mere looking askance at the other disharmonies will yield any result. We shall end our essay after raising one or two more issues.

Out of all the dissimilarities between men and women prevalent in almost all societies, the difference in the rights of inheritance has very cruel and bad consequences. The son has all the right to his father's property; the daughter is nobody. The son and the daughter have been born of the same father and of the same womb; the father and the mother look after both with equal care; they do their duties equally to both; but the son is allowed to squander away even one crore of rupees, inherited by him from his father after his father's death, in drinks and other things, while the daughter cannot get even a farthing to spend on dire necessities. The rationale behind this law as stated in the *Sastras* of the Hindus is that one who has the right to perform *Sraddha*, obsequial rights, has the right to inherit, but such a rationale is so irrelevant and unjust that to prove its illogicality is unnecessary. Let us see, whether such a rule has any other root of its own nature. It may be said that a wife has equal rights with her husband in her husband's property; and she is the lady of the house of her husband; she is the possessor of her husband's wealth, so there is no need

As a matter of fact there are one or two points in favour of polygamy, but according to my considered opinion polygamy is so much a reprehensible system that even the mention of one or two good points in it is full of dangerous consequences. (Bankim's own footnote.)

for her to have any right to her father's property. If this be the basis of the law under discussion, we may then ask why the widowed daughter does not inherit her father's property? The daughter who has been married to a poor man, why does she not inherit her father's property? But we are not willing to raise these petty objections. Our main objection is that women share property *only* as dependents of their sons or husbands or some such other man. Women have no independent right to property, they can only share in others' property—they can be rich only as others' maid servants—or else they cannot be rich; our main objection is to this. Serve at the feet of your husband; he may be wicked, he may use foul language, he may have bad habits; you are to tolerate everything—you are to be obedient to your indisciplined, abusive, ungrateful, sinful son—or, else there will be no relationship between property and womenfolk. If the husband and the son drive you out, everything is done and gone for you. You have no means to assert your own dignity and independence—there is no other means left to you except to tolerate. On the other hand what about the men? They own everything; even their wives' property is their property. A man can deprive his wife of everything if he wants to. There is no bar to his declaring complete independence. This difference is serious; it is against all morality and justice.

Many will say, this is an excellent law. Because of this law the wife is always under the control of her husband. True, the purpose of man-made laws is exactly that; tie up the hands and feet of women in all types of bonds and place her before the feet of her menfolk—let the men kick her as they like; women whose station in life is inferior to that of men's shall not even be able to groan. May we ask, if it is very desirable that women should be under the control of men, why shouldn't it be desirable that men be kept under the control of women too? You have bound the women in all types of available bondages; but why haven't you put any binding round the men? Are the women by nature bad-charactered? Or, is it true that because the rope is in the hands of the men,

the women have been tied so securely? If this is not against *Dharma*, I wonder what is against *Dharma*.

According to the Hindu *Sastras*, the women have rarely a right to property. Only if the husband dies without leaving a son, can she inherit his property. This is the only redeeming feature in the Hindu *Sastras*. Because of the presence of one or two such laws in the ancient *Sastras* of the Aryans, we brag about the superiority of our laws and codes over those of modern Europe. But this is the only good in the welter of bad things. The women have a right to property, but they can neither sell nor gift it out. What is the extent of this right? She will get only her maintenance; she will not be able to give anything to anyone; her right is confined to this. While the *Sastras* have no objection if a sinful son has all the happiness of the flesh by selling out his property, even a pious lady like Maharani Swarnamoyee cannot give away a small *bigha* of land to save the life of someone else. Why this disparity? There is no dearth of answers to this—women are nitwits, fickle-minded, incapable of maintaining property. They may whimsically transfer all their property to anybody and thus harm the lawful inheritor. That is why they should not have any right to transfer property to others. We do not agree to this. The women are not at all inferior to men in their intelligence, patience and sagacity. It is true that they are less educated than men in matters of running worldly affairs, but men are responsible for that. You keep them confined to your homes, do not allow them to look after economic affairs; that is why they do not learn how to run the world of business. Let them be engaged in economic activities, and then you can expect them to understand worldly affairs too. You cannot cut off the goat's head if you don't secure it to the block. Women are uneducated because of the fault of men—but the punishment for that fault is suffered by the women. This is not too bad a verdict!

I am reminded of a very interesting incident in connection with women's rights to property. A few years ago there was a case in the High Court. The Court had to decide whether an unchaste woman could have any right

to property. The judge said, yes. At this news the country went into turmoil. Everything is over! At last the Hindu women's *Dharma* of chastity has been obliterated! No one will preserve the *Dharma* of chastity! Bengali society does not want to spend money—they do not sign on subscription books without a Government order; but this rod struck such a vital spot that the Hindus on their own are raising a subscription and are ready to appeal to the Privy Council! The leading newspapers lamented by saying: "Oh! chastity, where art thou?" and cried, "please pay your subscriptions!" I do not know the end of this affair because we have willingly deprived ourselves of the pleasure of reading native newspapers. Whatever might have been the case, we have one thing to ask those who thought the judgment was a very dangerous thing. Agreed, the unchaste women should not have any right to property, that will keep the sin of lasciviousness under control; but won't it be good if along with this law there is another law; a wanton man or a man who commits adultery will also be deprived of his rights to property. You want to keep women chaste by confronting them with the fear of their deprivation from property; why don't you try and extend the same to the men so that they too keep to the right path? When a woman who has fallen from her *Dharma* loses her right to property, why shouldn't a man who has also fallen from his *Dharma* have the same fate? The man who has fallen from *Dharma*—a profligate, a thief, a liar, a drunkard, an ungrateful wretch—will get everything because he is a man? Only the unchaste women will have no right to any property because she is a woman! If this is *Dharma Sastra*, what then, is the negation of *Dharma Sastra*? If this is law, what then, is illegal? If raising subscriptions for the protection of this law is called patriotism, what will be called perdition?

Women's chastity should be safe-guarded by all means. No one objects to your introduction of as many bondages as you can think of for that purpose; rather, it is thought that the more such bondages you have, the better it is. But why is there no such restriction on men? A man

may go to the prostitutes, may commit adultery with another man's wife, why is there no restriction on that? Many will say that in the *Sastras* there are many injunctions against such things; for men also such things are very bad; people blame such men too—but thus far and no further. Men are not governed by the same type of hard and fast rules as the women are. As a matter of fact the rules that govern the conduct of men are very flexible. Mere words will not lead us anywhere; there is no social punishment for the fallen man. If a woman commits the slightest fault in matters of chastity, she cannot even show her face to others; sometimes too her relations might be inclined to administer poison to her. A man, however, can do such things in the open, can go back to his home in splendour and mirth, driving a phaeton in the wee hours of the morning to provide his wife with an occasion for touching the dust of his feet; his wife should be very happy at this. People don't talk ill of each other; he continues to enjoy the same status in society as before; no one feels hesitant in his conduct with such a man; and he can easily be regarded as a pillar of society if he has any demand to be so acclaimed. This is another serious disparity.

Another unjust difference is that, except the women from the lowest stratum of society, no other women in this country can earn her own living. It is true that the earning men look after the women of their own families. But there are many women who have no one to look after them. We are writing this especially keeping in view the widowed women of Bengal. The dearth of sustenance for the husbandless widows of Bengal is notorious; there is no need for dilating on this. That they cannot earn their own living is a gross cruelty of the society. It is, however, true that there is no bar against their taking up the job of a maid servant or a cook; but wives and daughters of a gentleman's family are incapable of doing such work—for them the pains of death would be better. There are three causes for their being unable to earn their livelihood through any other means. First, according to the customs of the country they cannot go out of their

homes. There is very little likelihood of one's earning anything if one does not go out of one's home. Secondly, the women of this country are neither well-educated nor are they adept in crafts, etc. One who is not well-educated in anything cannot earn his living. Thirdly, there are competitions from foreign candidates for jobs and from foreign industry. When even the men of this country are unable to make their both ends meet through service, trade, industry or business, what will the women do by entering these things?

The way to eradicate these three difficulties is one—education. If people get good education, especially if women get good education, they will easily take recourse to ways of not remaining hidden inside their homes. If women get education, they will have the potential for earning. And if the men and women of this country get good education in all types of knowledge, the foreign businessmen, the foreign industrialists and traders will not be able to snatch their livelihood from them. Education is the only remedy against all social evils.

If whatever we have said in this article is at all true, the plight of the women in our country must be very miserable. Who has done anything to remedy this? The doyen of the learneds Sree Iswarchandra Vidyasagar, and the Brahmos, have taken much pains—let their fame be immortal; but, save and except these few, no other effort has been made from this society itself. In this country there are many associations, leagues, societies, assemblies; clubs, etc.—the aim of some of them is politics, some aim at social ethics, some direct their activities towards religion, and the aim of some is evil doing, but there is none to work for the betterment of women. There is a society even to prevent people from beating animals, but there is none for the good of half the population of Bengal—the womenfolk. During the last few years we have witnessed that much money has been spent for schools, hospitals and animal homes, but can't anything be done to improve this menagerie which exists in the form of the Bengali families?

This cannot be done; for, there is no fun in it. Nothing can be done; for, there are no temptations of such titles

as *Rai Bahadur*, *Raja Bahadur*, *Star of India*, etc., in this. The only thing that there is for such activities is the applause of the bumpkins and fools. Who, then, will come forward ?

Conclusion

If we want to show a third instance of disparity in the present-day society of this country, we shall have to mention the discord among the *jatis*. We are not referring to the distinction of *Varnas*. We have already given some ideas of the result of the discords brought about by the differences based on *Varna* in ancient India. We have explained, with the help of the example of the peasant, the social discord that has arisen because of this. Now-a-days there is no diversity of rights based on the diversity of *Varnas* ; whatever is left, is negligible. The division based on *jati* about which we are talking is the division between the conqueror and the conquered. There is a distinction in the rights of the ruling *jati* and the subject *jati*. Indeed, the distinction is discussed ubiquitously by the people of this country, so there is no need for discussing that in detail here.

To conclude ; we would like only this to be understood, that we do not intend to give such explications of egalitarianism as would imply that all men should be in the same condition. That can never be. Where there is a natural difference in intelligence, mental powers, education, strength, etc., there will be differences in conditions—no one will be willing to resist this. But the equality of rights is necessary—if one has the power, he should not be disappointed on the plea that he has no right. Let the way to progress be opened all over.

GLOSSARY OF NON-ENGLISH WORDS

Agmani	A present to welcome a big man.
Amin	A confidential agent, a trustee, a commissioner, applied to a native officer of Government, employed either in the revenue department to take charge of an estate and collect the revenues on account of Government, or to investigate and report their amount; or in the judicial department, as a judge and arbitrator in civil causes.
Amla	The head native officer of a judicial or revenue court under an European judge or Collector.
Babu	A title of respect attached to a Hindu name. It also means a white-collar man, an absentee landlord, a man who lives on unearned income.
Chaprash	A badge, a plate worn on a belt as a mark of Office.
Chaprashi	A messenger or courier wearing a <i>chaprash</i> , usually a public servant.
Dar-Pattanidar	See "Pattani".
Gola	A granary; a barn. In Bengal it is usually a circular structure (<i>gol</i> is a circle in Bengali) of mats or clay, raised a few feet from the ground upon short pillars of wood or bamboo, or stone, and covered by thatch.
Gomosta	An agent, a steward, a confidential factor, a representative; an officer employed by <i>Zamindars</i> to collect their rents, by bankers to receive money, etc., by grocers to assist them in weighing things.
Halshana	A village officer or servant.
Ijara	Lease.
Ijaradar	Lessee.
Ijarapattani	Sub-tenure. <i>Pattani</i> system of sub-tenancy originated in Burdwan (West Bengal) being created by the <i>Raja</i> or <i>Zamindar</i> : it was extended and sanctioned by regulation afterwards.
Jati	The word is used in the following senses: kind, sort, genus, species, caste, tribe, category, nationality, religious groups and such other things meaning a collection or a group of some special sort. Professor M. N. Srinivas' idea that the word <i>Jati</i> is more specific in its meaning than the word <i>caste</i> seems to be a bit off the track.
Kachari	A court, a hall, an office, the place where public business is transacted.
Khansama	A house-steward or butler, usually a Muslim.

Kotal	Originally it meant an office similar to the head of the police force; but it was also applied to a watchman.
Mahal	In the language of regulations a <i>mahal</i> , or <i>mehal</i> , is called an estate, and is defined as any parcel, or parcels of land which may be separately assessed with the public revenue; the whole property of the revenue-payers in the <i>mahal</i> being held hypotheticated to government for the sum assessed upon it.
Mandal	The head man of a village, who sometimes acts as the agent of the <i>Zamindar</i> . In parts of Bengal the term is a caste name. The members of this caste are usually peasants and do not belong to the higher castes.
Mahashoy	A respectable person, one possessed of great merit; but the word is usually used as a term of respectful address, as, sir, master, your honour, etc. The reader should note Bankim's sarcastic use of the word.
Mofussel	Properly separate, distinct, particular. In India, a subordinate or separate district; the countryside, the provinces, or the stations in country, as opposed to the <i>Sadar</i> , or principal station or town: any other place than the ordinary place of office or residence; as a <i>darogha</i> (Sub-inspector of Police) leaving a police station to go to a village in his jurisdiction, is said to have gone to the <i>Mofussil</i> , and the same is said of a villager who has gone from his cottage to his fields. Its most usual application in Bengal, however, during the days of Bankim and earlier, is to the country-side in general, as distinct from metropolitan Calcutta.
Muhurrie	A clerk, a writer, a scribe. It also means a drain.
Nagdi	An amount paid, or to be paid, in cash or ready money, in contradistinction to that which is paid in kind.
Naib	A deputy, a representative, a lieutenant (not in the military sense of the term), a sub- or deputy-collector. Usually, in Bengal, a <i>naib</i> is a revenue collector on behalf of a <i>Zamindar</i> .
Nazar	A present, an offering, especially one from an inferior to a superior, to a holy man, or to a prince: a present in general: a fine or fee paid to the state, or its representative, on succeeding to office or property. A payment made to the <i>Zamindar</i> by those who cultivate his land or are his lessees.
Paik	A footman, an armed attendant of an inferior officer, a messenger, a courier, a village watchman, or an armed watchman in the house of a <i>Zamindar</i> who is also used to keep the <i>Zamindar's mahal</i> in order.

Parvani	A fee exacted for the performance of ceremonies by the <i>Zamindar</i> : an impost levied on the <i>ryots</i> , by the <i>Zamindar</i> to defray the cost of the religious ceremonies and festivities (<i>parva</i>) celebrated by the <i>Zamindar</i> .
Pattani	A tenure by which the occupant holds a portion of the <i>Zamindari</i> (the land of a <i>Zamindar</i>) in perpetuity, with the right of hereditary succession, and of letting or selling the whole or part as long as a stipulated amount of the rent is paid to the <i>Zamindar</i> , who retains the power of sale or fine upon any transfer: a tenure created by an under-letting in the second degree is termed <i>Dar-pattani</i> (or lease within lease).
Pranami	Things given as a token of respect. Usually the <i>ryots</i> were required to bow down before the feet of the <i>Zamindar</i> or his representative. At that time they were required to offer something in cash or kind to the <i>Zamindar</i> or his representative. The <i>Zamindars</i> were mostly from higher caste Hindus.
Punayaha	In the lower provinces the day on which the revenue for the ensuing year is settled, or an annual meeting of the direct revenue payers at the office of the chief collector, or of the cultivating tenants at the court of the <i>Zamindar</i> , to determine the amount of assessment; the assemblage of the rent-payers forming a kind of festival or holiday: the term is also applied to the day on which the first instalment of the annual rent or revenue is paid.
Rai Bahadur, Raja Bahadur	Titles conferred by the British Government on those Hindus whose services they recognised. The lowest of these honorifics was <i>Rai Saheb</i> . The corresponding honorifics for the Muslims were <i>Khan Saheb</i> and <i>Khan Bahadur</i> . <i>Raja Bahadur</i> and <i>Maharaj Bahadur</i> were honorifics given by the British Government in recognition of the services of the Hindu <i>Zamindars</i> . The Muslim <i>Zamindars</i> were given the title of <i>Nawab Bahadur</i> .
Rui, Katla, Mrigel	Names of large size fresh-water fish in Bengal. These fish are considered to be delicacies.
Ryot	Broadly speaking a <i>ryot</i> is a cultivating tenant. However, the term is associated with the land tenure system of the then Bengal.
Salami	Relating to compliments or salutations, especially a complimentary present, a present to a superior upon being introduced to him: a gratuity or offering on receiving a lease or settling for the revenue or on receiving any favour real or implicit, a fee or fine levied annually on the holders of rent-free tenures as quit-rent: applied effectively to tenure so held.
Shara	The law, or the precepts of Islam as given in the Koran.

- Taluk** An estate, applied to a tract of proprietary land, usually smaller than a *Zamindari*, held at a fixed amount of revenue, hereditary and transferable as long as the revenue is paid. This is what is meant by *Taluk* and *Talukdar* (the owner of a *Taluk*) in Bengal is a comparatively smaller landholder than the *Zamindar*.
- Tashildar** A native collector of revenue, a native collecting the revenue from a given tract under a *Zamindar*.

NB These notes are either based on or taken from *A Glossary of Judicial and Revenue Terms and of Useful Words Occurring in Official Documents Relating to the Administration of the Government of British India, from the Arabic, Persian, Industani, Sanskrit, Hindi, Bengali, Oriya, Marathi, Gujrati, Telugu, Kannada, Tamil, Malayalam, and other Languages*, compiled and published under the Authority of the Honourable the Court of Directors of the East India Company by H. H. Wilson, MA, FRS. Published by W. H. Allen & Co., London, 1855. Second edition, published by Munshiram Manoharlal, Delhi, 1968.

APPENDICES

Appendix I.

To

His Excellency the Right Hon'ble William Pitt, Lord
Amherst

My Lord,

Humbly reluctant as the natives of India are to obtrude upon the notice of Government sentiments they entertain on any public measure, there are circumstances when silence would be carrying this respectful feeling to culpable excess. The present Rulers of India, coming from a distance of many thousand miles to govern a people whose language, literature, manners, customs, and ideas are almost entirely new and strange to them, cannot easily become so intimately acquainted with their real circumstances as the natives of the country are themselves. We should therefore be guilty of a gross dereliction of duty to ourselves, and afford our Rulers just ground of complaint at our apathy, did we omit on occasions of importance like the present to supply them with such accurate information as might enable them to devise and adopt measures calculated to be beneficial to the country, and thus second by our local knowledge and experience their declared benevolent intentions for its improvement.

The establishment of a new Sangscrit School in Calcutta evinces the laudable desire of Government to improve the Natives of India by Education,—a blessing for which they must ever be grateful; and every well wisher of the human race must be desirous that the efforts made to promote it should be guided by the most enlightened principles, so that the stream of intelligence may flow into the most useful channels.

When this Seminary of learning was proposed, we understood that the Government in England had ordered a considerable sum of money to be annually devoted to the instruction of its Indian subjects. We were filled with

sanguine hopes that this sum would be laid out in employing European Gentlemen of talents and education to instruct the natives of India in Mathematics, Natural Philosophy, Chemistry, Anatomy and other useful Sciences, which the Nations of Europe have carried to a degree that has raised them above the inhabitants of other parts of the world.

While we looked forward with pleasing hope to the dawn of knowledge thus promised to the rising generation, our hearts were filled with mingled feelings of delight and gratitude ; we already offered up thanks to Providence for inspiring the most generous and enlightened of the Nations of the West with the glorious ambitions of planting in Asia the Arts and Sciences of modern Europe.

We now find that the Government are establishing a Sangscrit school under Hindoo Pundits to impart such knowledge as is already current in India. This seminary (similar in character to those which existed in Europe before the time of Lord Bacon) can only be expected to load the minds of youth with grammatical niceties and metaphysical distinctions of little or no practicable use to the possessors or to society. The pupils will there acquire what was known two thousand years ago, with the addition of vain and empty subtilities since produced by speculative men, such as is already commonly taught in all parts of India.

The Sangscrit language, so difficult that almost a lifetime is necessary for its perfect acquisition, is well known to have been for ages a lamentable check on the diffusion of knowledge; and the learning concealed under this almost impervious veil is far from sufficient to reward the labour of acquiring it. But if it were thought necessary to perpetuate this language for the sake of the portion of the valuable information it contains, this might be much more easily accomplished by other means than the establishment of a new Sangscrit College; for there have been always and are now numerous professors of Sangscrit in the different parts of the country, engaged in teaching this language as well as the other branches of literature, which are to be the object of the new Seminary. There-

fore their more diligent cultivation, if desirable, would be efficiently promoted by holding out premiums and granting certain allowances to those most eminent Professors, who have already undertaken on their own account to teach them, and would by such rewards be stimulated to still greater exertions.

From these considerations, as the sum set apart for the instruction of the Natives of India was intended by the Government in England, for the improvement of its Indian subjects, I beg leave to state, with due deference to your Lordship's exalted situation, that if the plan now adopted be followed, it will completely defeat the object proposed ; since no improvement can be expected from inducing young men to consume a dozen of years of the most valuable period of their lives in acquiring the niceties of the Byakurun or Sangscrit Grammar. For instance, in learning to discuss such points as the following : *Khad* signifying to eat, *khaduti*, he or she or it eats. Query, whether does the word *khaduti* taken as a whole, convey the meaning, *he*, *she*, or *it eats*, or are separate parts of this meaning conveyed by distinct portions of the word ? As if in the English language it were asked, how much meaning is there in the *eat*, how much in the *s* ? and is the whole meaning of the word conveyed by those two portions of it distinctly, or by them taken jointly ?

Neither can much improvement arise from such speculations as the following, which are the themes suggested by the Vedant :--In what manner is the soul absorbed into the deity ? What relation does it bear to the divine essence ? Nor will youths be fitted to be better members of society by the Vedantic doctrines, which teach them to believe that all visible things have no real existence ; that as father, brother, etc., have no real affection, and therefore the sooner we escape from them and leave the world the better. Again, no essential benefit can be derived by the student of the Meemangsa from knowing what it is that makes the killer of a goat sinless on pronouncing certain passages of the Vedas, and what is the real nature and operative influence of passages of the Ved, etc.

Again the student of the Nyaya Shastra cannot be said

to have improved his mind after he has learned into how many ideal classes the objects in the Universe are divided, and what speculative relation the soul bears to the body, the body to the soul, the eye to the ear, etc.

In order to enable your Lordship to appreciate the utility of encouraging such imaginary learning as above characterized, I beg your Lordship will be pleased to compare the state of science and literature in Europe before the time of Lord Bacon, with the progress of knowledge made since he wrote.

If it had been intended to keep the British nation in ignorance of real knowledge, the Baconian philosophy would not have been allowed to displace the system of the schoolmen, which was the best calculated to perpetuate ignorance. In the same manner, the Sangscrit system of education would be best calculated to keep this country in darkness, if such had been the policy of the British Legislature. But as the improvement of the native population is the object of the Government, it will consequently promote a more liberal and enlightened system of instruction, embracing mathematics, natural philosophy, chemistry and anatomy, with other useful sciences which may be accomplished with the sum proposed by employing a few gentlemen of talents and learning educated in Europe, and providing a college furnished with the necessary books, instruments and other apparatus.

In representing this subject to your Lordship I conceive myself discharging a solemn duty which I owe to my countrymen and also to that enlightened Sovereign and Legislature which have extended their benevolent cares to this distant land actuated by a desire to improve its inhabitants and I therefore humbly trust you will excuse the liberty I have taken in thus expressing my sentiments to your Lordship.

Calcutta,
The 11th December, 1823

I have, etc.
Rammohan Roy.

Appendix II.

To The Honourable Sir Francis Magnaghten,
Sole Acting Judge of the Supreme Court of
Judicature at Fort William in Bengal

My Lord,

In consequence of the late Rule and Ordinance passed by His Excellency the Governor General in Council, regarding the Publication of Periodical Works, your Memorialists consider themselves called upon with due submission, to represent to you their feelings and sentiments on the subject.

Your Memorialists beg leave, in the first place, to bring to the notice of your Lordship, various proofs given by the Natives of this country of their unshaken loyalty to, and unlimited confidence in the British Government of India, which may remove from your mind any apprehension of the Government being brought into hatred and contempt, or of the peace, harmony, and good order of society in this country, being liable to be interrupted and destroyed, as implied in the preamble of the above Rule and Ordinance.

First. Your Lordship is well aware, that the Natives of Calcutta and its vicinity, have voluntarily entrusted Government with millions of their wealth, without indicating the least suspicion of its stability and good faith, and reposing in the sanguine hope that their property being so secured, their interests will be as permanent as the British Power itself; while on the contrary, their fathers were invariably compelled to conceal their treasures in the bowels of the earth, in order to preserve them from the insatiable rapacity of their oppressive Rulers.

Secondly. Placing entire reliance on the promises made by the British Government at the time of the Perpetual Settlement of the landed property in this part of India, in 1773, the Landholders have since, by constantly improving their estates, been able to increase their produce, in general very considerably; whereas, prior to that period, and under former Governments, their forefathers were obliged to lay waste the greater part of their estates, in order to make

them appear of inferior value, that they might not excite the cupidity of the Government, and thus cause their rents to be increased or themselves to be dispossessed of their lands,—a pernicious practice which often incapacitated the landholders from discharging even their stipulated revenue to Government, and reduced their families to poverty.

Thirdly. During the last wars which the British Government were obliged to undertake against neighbouring Powers, it is well known, that the great body of Natives of wealth and respectability, as well as the Landholders of consequence, offered up regular prayers to the objects of their worship for the success of the British arms from a deep conviction that under the sway of that nation, their improvement, both mental and social, would be promoted, and their lives, religion, and property be secured. Actuated by such feelings, even in those critical times, which are the best test of the loyalty of the subject, they voluntarily came forward with a large portion of their property to enable the British Government to carry into effect the measures necessary for its own defence, considering the cause of the British as their own, and firmly believing that on its success, their own happiness and prosperity depended.

Fourthly. It is manifest as the light of day, that the general subjects of observation and the constant and familiar topic of discourse among the Hindu community of Bengal, are the literary and political improvements which are continually going on in the state of the country under the present system of Government, and a comparison between their present auspicious prospects and their hopeless condition under their former Rulers.

Under these circumstances, your Lordship cannot fail to be impressed with a full conviction, that whoever charges the Natives of this country with disloyalty, or insinuates aught to the prejudice of their fidelity and attachment to the British Government, must either be totally ignorant of the affairs of this country and the feelings and sentiments of its inhabitants, as above stated, or, on the contrary, be desirous of misrepresenting the people and misleading the Government, both here and in England, for unworthy purposes of his own.

Your Memorialists must confess, that these feelings of loyalty and attachment, of which the most unequivocal proofs stand on record, have been produced by the wisdom and liberality displayed by the British Government in the means adopted for the gradual improvement of their social and domestic condition, by the establishment of Colleges, Schools, and other beneficial institutions in this city, among which the creation of a British Court of Judicature for the more effectual administration of Justice, deserves to be gratefully remembered.

A proof of the Natives of India being more and more attached to the British Rule in proportion as they experience from it the blessings of just and liberal treatment, is, that the Inhabitants of Calcutta, who enjoy in many respects very superior privileges to those of their fellow-subjects in other parts of the country, are known to be in like measure more warmly devoted to the existing Government; nor is it at all wonderful they should in loyalty be not at all inferior to British-born Subjects, since they feel assured of the possession of the same civil and religious liberty, which is enjoyed in England, without being subjected to such heavy taxation as presses upon the people there.

Hence the population of Calcutta, as well as the value of land in this City, have rapidly increased of late years, notwithstanding the high rents of houses and the dearness of all the necessaries of life compared with other parts of the country, as well as the Inhabitants being subjected to additional taxes, and also liable to the heavy costs necessarily incurred in case of suits before the Supreme Court.

Your Lordship may have learned from the works of the Christian Missionaries, and also from other sources, that ever since the art of printing has become generally known among the Natives of Calcutta, numerous Publications have been circulated in the Bengalee Language, which by introducing free discussion among the Natives and inducing them to reflect and inquire after knowledge, have already served greatly to improve their minds and ameliorate their condition. This desirable object has been chiefly promoted by the establishment of four Native News-

papers, two in the Bengalee and two in the Persian Languages, published for the purpose of communicating to those residing in the interior of the country, accounts of whatever occurs worthy of notice at the Presidency or in the country, and also the interesting and valuable intelligence of what is passing in England and in other parts of the world, conveyed through the English Newspapers or other channels.

Your Memorialists are unable to discover any disturbance of the peace, harmony, and good order of society, that has arisen from the English Press, the influence of which must necessarily be confined to that part of the community who understand the language thoroughly; but they are quite confident, that the publications in the Native Languages, whether in the shape of a Newspaper or any other work, have none of them calculated to bring the Government of the country into hatred and contempt, and that they have not proved, as far as can be ascertained by the strictest inquiry, in the slightest degree injurious; which has very lately been acknowledged in one of the most respectable English Missionary works. So far from obtruding upon Government groundless representations, Native Authors and Editors have already restrained themselves from publishing even such facts respecting the judicial proceedings in the Interior of the country as they thought were likely at first view to be obnoxious to Government.

While your Memorialists were indulging the hope that Government, from a conviction of the manifold advantages of being put in possession of full and impartial information regarding what is passing in all parts of the Country, would encourage the establishment of Newspapers in the cities and districts under the special patronage and protection of Government, that they might furnish the Supreme Authorities in Calcutta with an accurate account of local occurrences and reports of Judicial proceedings,—they have the misfortune to observe, that on the contrary, his Excellency the Governor-General in Council has lately promulgated a Rule and Ordinance imposing severe restraints on the Press and prohibiting all Periodical Publications

even at the Presidency and in the Native Languages, unless sanctioned by a License from Government, which is to be revocable at pleasure whenever it shall appear to Government that a publication has contained anything of an unsuitable character.

The Natives who are in more favourable circumstances and of respectable character, have such an invincible prejudice against making a voluntary affidavit, or undergoing solemnities of an oath, that they will never think of establishing a publication which can only be supported by a series of oaths and affidavits, abhorrent to their feelings and derogatory to their reputation amongst their countrymen.

After this Rule and Ordinance shall have been carried into execution, your Memorialists are therefore extremely sorry to observe, that a complete stop will be put to the diffusion of knowledge and the consequent mental improvement now going on, either by translations into the popular dialect of this country from the learned languages of the East, or by the circulation of literary intelligence drawn from foreign publications. And the same cause will also prevent those Natives who are better versed in the laws and customs of the British Nation, from communicating to their fellow-subjects a knowledge of the admirable system of Government established by the British, and the peculiar excellencies of the means they have adopted for the strict and impartial administration of justice. Another evil of equal importance in the eyes of a just Ruler, is, that it will also preclude the Natives from making the Government readily acquainted with the errors and injustice that may be committed by its executive officers in the various parts of this extensive country ; and it will also preclude the Natives from communicating frankly and honestly to their Gracious Sovereign in England and his Council, the real condition of his Majesty's faithful subjects in this distant part of his dominions and the treatment they experience from the local Government ; since such information cannot in future be conveyed to England, as it has heretofore been, either by the translations from the Native publications inserted in the English Newspapers printed here and sent to Europe, or by the English

publications which the Natives themselves had in contemplation to establish, before this Rule and Ordinance was proposed.

After this sudden deprivation of one of the most precious of their rights, which has been freely allowed them since the Establishment of the British Power, a right which they are not, and cannot be charged with having ever abused, the inhabitants of Calcutta would be no longer justified in boasting, that they are fortunately placed by Providence under the protection of the whole British Nation, or that the King of England and his Lords and Commons are their Legislators, and that they are secured in the enjoyment of the same civil and religious privileges that every Briton is entitled to in England.

Your Memorialists are persuaded that the British Government is not disposed to adopt the political maxim so often acted upon by Asiatic Princes, that the more a people are kept in darkness, their Rulers will derive the greater advantages from them ; since, by reference to History, it is found that this was but a short-sighted policy which did not ultimately answer the purpose of its authors. On the contrary, it rather proved disadvantageous to them ; for we find that as often as an ignorant people, when an opportunity offered, have revolted against their Rulers, all sorts of barbarous excesses and cruelties have been the consequence ; whereas a people naturally disposed to peace and ease, when placed under a good Government from which they experience just and liberal treatment, must become the more attached to it, in proportion as they become enlightened and the great body of the people are taught to appreciate the value of the blessings they enjoy under its Rule.

Every good Ruler, who is convinced of the imperfection of human nature, and reverences the Eternal Governor of the World, must be conscious of the great liability to error in managing the affairs of a vast empire ; and therefore he will be anxious to afford every individual the readiest means of bringing to his notice whatever may require his interference. To secure this important object, the unrestrained Liberty of Publication, is the only effec-

tual means that can be employed. And should it ever be abused, the established Law of the Land is very properly armed with efficient powers to punish those who may be found guilty of misrepresenting the conduct or character of Government, which are effectually guarded by the same Laws to which the individuals must look for protection of their reputation and good name.

Your Memorialists conclude by humbly entreating your Lordship to take this Memorial into your gracious consideration ; and that you will be pleased by not registering the above Rule and Ordinance, to permit the Natives of this country continue in possession of the civil rights and privileges which they and their fathers have so long enjoyed under the auspices of the British nation, whose kindness, and confidence, they are not aware of having done anything to forfeit.

Appendix III.

These excerpts have been taken from Vols. X and XI of *The Works of Jeremy Bentham*—published under the Superintendence of His Executor, George Bowring, New York 1962.

I

Bentham's opinions of some of his contemporaries.... (Vol. X p. 571).

Rammohun Roy has cast off thirty-five millions of gods, and has learnt from us to embrace reason in the all important field of religion. (*Ibid.* p. 571).

II

Bentham to Rammohun Roy.

Intensely admired and dearly beloved collaborator in the service of Mankind ! Your character is made known to me by our excellent friends, Colonel Young, Colonel Stanhope, and Mr. Buckingham. Your works, by a book in which I read, a style which but for the name of an Hindoo, I should have ascribed to the pen of a superiorly well-educated and instructed Englishman. A just-now-published work of mine, which I send by favour of Mrs Young, ex-

hibits my view of the foundations of human belief specially applied to the practice of this country in matters of law.

Now at the brink of the grave, (for I want but a month or two of fourscore,) among the most delightful of my reflections is the hope. I am not withstanding feeding myself with, of rendering my labours of some considerable use to the hundred millions, or thereabouts, of whom I understand that part of your population which is under English governance of influence is composed.

With Mr. Mill's work on British India you can scarcely fail to be more or less acquainted. For these three or four-and-twenty years he has numbered himself among my disciples; for upwards of twenty years he has been receiving my instructions; for about the half of each of five years he and his family have been my guests. If not adequately known already, his situation in the East India Company's service can be explained to you by Colonel Young. My papers on Evidence,—those papers which you now see in print—were in his hands, and read through by him, while occupied in his above-noticed great work; a work from which more practically applicable information on the subject of government and policy may be derived (I think I can venture to say) than from any other as yet extant; though, as to style, I wish I could, with truth and sincerity, pronounce it equal to yours.

For these many years a grand object of his ambition has been to provide for British India, in the room of the abominable existing system, a good system of judicial procedure, with a judicial establishment adequate to the administration of it; and for the composition of it his reliance has all along been, and continues to be, on me. What I have written on these subjects wants little of being complete; so little that, were I to die to-morrow, there are those that would be able to put it in order and carry it through the press.

What he aims at above all things is,—the giving stability and security to landed property in the hands of the greatest number throughout British India; and, for this purpose, to ascertain by judicial inquiry, the state of the

customs of the people in that respect. For this same purpose a great *increase* in the number of *judicatories* together with the *oral examination* of all parties concerned, and *recordation* of the result will be absolutely necessary: the mode of proceeding as simple as possible, unexpensive and prompt, forming in these respects as complete a contrast as possible with the abominable system of the great Calcutta Judicatory: nations of unmixed blood and half-caste, both of whom could serve on moderate salaries, being, on my system, as much employed as possible.

Though but very lately known to your new Governor-general, Mr. Mill is in high favour with him; and (I have reason to believe) will have a good deal of influence, which, in that case, he will employ for the purpose above-mentioned.

He has assured his lordship that there can be no good panel judicature without an apt *prison* and prison-management; and no apt prison or prison-management, without the plan which we call the *Panopticon* plans,—an account of which is in a work of mine, a copy of which, if I can find one, will accompany this letter. At any rate, Colonel Young can explain it to you, with the cause why it was not, five-and-thirty years ago, established here; and all the prisoners, as well as all the paupers of England, put under my care: all the persons being, at all times, under the eye of the keepers, and the keepers, as well as they, under the eye of as many people as do not grudge the trouble of walking up a few steps for the purpose.

“For I know not how many years—a dozen or fifteen, perhaps—I have never paid a single visit to anybody, except during about three months, when a complaint I was troubled with forced me to bathing places, and at length to Paris. Thus it is that Lord William and I have never come together; and now there is not time enough. Half jest, half earnest, Mr Mill promised him a meeting with me on his return from India; for old as I am, I am in good health and spirits, and have as yet lost but little of the very little strength I had in my youth. Though the *influence* of my writings is said to be something, of any-

thing that can be called *power* I have not had any the least atom. I have some reason for expecting that, ere long, more or less use will be made of my work on Judicial Procedure by Government here. But, from the influence possessed by Mr Mill, and the intense anxiety he has been manifesting for some years past for the completion of it, my hopes have in relation to your country been rather sanguine. Of the characters of it I cannot find time to say anything, except that, by the regard shown in it to the interests of the subject many, and by its simplicity, which I have endeavoured to maximize, I have little fear of its not recommending itself to your affections.

“What regards the Judiciary Establishment will form about half of the second of two volumes, a copy of the first of which (with the exception of six introductory parts) being already in print, is designed to form part of the contents of this packet.

“While writing, it has occurred to me to add a copy of a work called *Panopticon*; the rather because, at the desire of Mr Mill, it is in the hands of your new Governor-general, Lord William Bentinck, to whom Mr Mill has been recommending, and, as he flatters himself, not altogether without success, the erection of a place of confinement, upon the principles therein displayed. More than thirty years ago, but for a personal pique taken against me by the late king, George the Third, all the prisoners in the kingdom, and all the paupers, would, under my care, have been provided for by me upon the same principle. To the Prime Minister of the time, (from 1792 to 1802), with his colleagues, it was an object of enthusiastic and persevering admiration; and not only was an act of the Legislature, which (you know) could not have been enacted without the king’s consent, obtained for the purpose, but so much as related to the experimental prison carried into effect as the purchase of a large spot of ground for the purpose, and the greatest part put into my possession; but when the last step came to be taken, George the Third could not be prevailed upon to take it; and so the affair ended.

“In my Codification Proposal, you will see letter for

Del Valle of Guatemala, *alias* Central America, in late Spanish America. He is the instructor of his country ; such an one as you of yours. I thus mention him to you. I shall mention you to him. Several papers he has sent me have made known to me his history, his occupations, and his designs. I hear him spoken of, from various quarters, as by far the most estimable man that late Spanish America has produced. If there by anything that you could like to transmit to him, it would be a sincere pleasure to me to receive it, and transmit it to him accordingly. Yours and his are kindred souls. Though in his country highest in estimation, it is still uncertain whether he is so in power, there being another man whose party is at war with that to which Del Valle wishes best ; but, as far as I can learn, that of Del Valle is most likely to be ultimately prevailing.

“Bowring, with whom you have corresponded, is now living with me. He is the most intimate friend I have : the most influential as well as ardent man I know, in the endeavour at everything that is most serviceable to mankind.

“Farewell, illustrious friend ! You may imagine from what is above, with what pleasure I should hear from you. Information from you might perhaps be made of use with reference to the above objects. But you should, in that case, send me two letters—one confidential, another ostensible. If I live seven days longer, I shall be fourscore. To make provision for the event of my death, you should do by your letters to me, as Colonel Young has done by his : send it open, enclosed in one to Bowring.

“We have high hopes of Lord William’s good intentions : so much better than from so high an aristocratical family as his could have been expected.

“I have been asking our common friends here, over and over again, for their assurance that there is some chance of your paying a visit to this strange country. I can get little better from them, than a shake of the head.

“P.S. Panopticon. Should this plan, and the reasoning, meet your approbation, you will see that none of the business as to which it is applicable, could be carried on

well otherwise than by contract. What say you to the making singly, or in conjunction with other enlightened philanthropists, an offer to Government for that purpose? Professors of all religions might join in the contract; and appropriate classification and separation for the persons under management: provision correspondent to their several religions, and their respective castes; or other allocations under their respective religions. How it would delight me to see you and Colonel Young engaged in a partnership for a purpose of that sort!"

Ibid., pp. 589-592

III

Colonel Young to Bentham

"Calcutta, September 30, 1828.

"My dear and venerated friend,—I failed not to send off to Rammohun Roy, my excellent friend the Brahmin, his portion of the package's contents and your letter to him; and he tells me, in a note, that he will endeavour, to the utmost of his ability, to write to you on the subject of your letter, and thank you for your notice of him. He is a very sincerely modest man—far too different indeed for the remarkable and *unique* station he fills among his benighted countrymen. His whole time almost has been occupied for the last two years in defending himself and his son against a bitter and virulent persecution which has been got up against the latter nominally—but against himself and his abhorred free opinions in reality—by a conspiracy of his own bigoted countrymen, protected and encouraged, not to say instigated, by some of ours—influential and official men who cannot endure that a presumptuous 'Black Man' should tread so closely upon the heels of the dominant white class, or rather should *pass* them in the march of mind. Rammohun Roy, after an arduous and prolonged battle through a gradation of tribunals, has at length, by dint of talent, perseverance, and right, got the better in the last resort; but the strife, and the magnitude of the stake, and the long despair of justice, have shattered his nerves and impaired his digestion and bodily health, and his energies of mind. It is now

over, and I hope most fervently that he will recover himself again. Not only has he no *equal* here among his countrymen, but he has none that at all *approach* to equality, even among the little 'sacred squadron' of disciples whom he is slowly and gradually gathering around him in despite of obstacles from his own and our people, which no one can rightly appreciate who has not seen and felt the difficulties which the condition of society here opposes to a reformer, and, above all, to a native reformer. But he perseveres, and does make a *distinct* and visible progress, slow as it is—very slow! It must increase in a geometric ratio, if he is only spared long enough to organize the elements he is gathering together of resistance to superstition and fanaticism, religious and political. His main efforts are directed, and judiciously so, to the primary step in the process of amelioration—of throwing off the yoke of priesthood and of caste. The diabolical genius who devised the separation of Hindoos into orders, who are cut off from all social and intimate connexion of what may be called a *domestic nature* with each other, set at work an instrument complete and effectual in its operation for the political as well as the religious prostration of mankind. Where men may not dwell with each other in domestic association—where they cannot eat or drink, intermarry, and intercommune together, because of difference of tribe and privilege—where this evil has been fixed and imprinted by many centuries of habitual acquiescence, and under horrible penalties of excommunication—where such is the frame of society, how can men combine for any useful purpose of improvement or resistance? No wonder that the Hindoos have always been enslaved and oppressed when they are thus effectually divided! Till these barriers can be weakened or broken down, *nothing* can be done *by* them, or perhaps *for* them. It is against this anti-social element of Hindoo society that Rammohun Roy directs his quiet—his secret—but his persevering endeavours; and by avoiding any public alarming of the Brahminical and higher orders of his countrymen—and, I may add, of our own jealous aristocracy of colour and of place, he is obtaining the slow but distinct progress to

which I have adverted—he is gathering round him a secret society of Hindoos of various castes, whom he persuades by degrees to associate, and even eat together at his house. Those who go beyond this *awful* line of demarcation can never recede; that is, the *higher* orders (and he is himself of the very highest caste) of Brahmins, and others, who are *committed* by the act of degradation implied in domestic intercourse with inferior tribes.

“I fear I may have failed in impressing you with the same notions which I entertain, of the infinite importance of this line of conduct. As I have said before, one must have personal experience of the abominations of this *sort* of politico-religious aristocratical frame of society, to appreciate it. Without that it is natural that philanthropists, at a distance, should think Rammohun Roy wastes his time and expends his valuable life and labours in work of an inferior sort,—and you may fancy that he moves too slowly, and does not come forward with sufficient boldness, to strike at greater evils, and attack men and measures of a higher order. But to what end should he labour at such works if the ground be not prepared to receive the seed? As yet there are none or next to none fit to comprehend the more lofty imaginings which his master-mind can grasp, and on which he loves to expatiate in the confidential society of some three or four heterodox Europeans. But he is ploughing, and harrowing, and planting, and our ‘aftercomers’, if *he* lives long enough, will see the fruits. It is strange, you will think, that such a man should be looked upon coldly, not to say disliked, by the mass of Europeans,—for he is greatly attached to us and our *regime*. Not that he loves our churches, or priests, or lawyers, or politicians; but because he considers the contact of our superior race with *his* degraded and inferior countrymen, as the only means and chance they have of improving themselves in knowledge and energy. But it is one of the thousand curses inflicted by the Company’s *régime* in India, that nineteen in twenty, or rather ninety-nine in a hundred, of the only Europeans who are allowed to come to this country, are employees, civil or military who resort hither to scrape up and carry away all they can, and as

soon as they can, without heed, or care, or concern in the prosperity of India. A dominating race thus *encamped* in a conquered country, and an infinitesimally and small minority in numbers, naturally looks with the extreme of jealousy on all improvements, physical and mental, of the Indigines, or even of their own mixed descendants; nor will it ever be otherwise till resort is free to all who can bring with them or obtain the means of supporting themselves, settling, colonizing, and amalgamating, and identifying themselves and their posterity with the natives.

* * * * * * *

"To the evil of general jobbing and general distrust, there is a remedy fully and universally applicable,—Public opinion. If independent Europeans were not kept out, and being here, if they could speak freely through the press, and were not liable to deportation at will, then there would be such a check on the proceeding of secretaries, and boards, and councils, as would deter them from jobbery and injustice. Then the supreme authority might safely and satisfactorily leave nine-tenths of its trumpery avocations to inferior functionaries. Then there would be *time* to legislate and improve, and, before all things, to codify, while our statute-book is yet manageably small, and our corps of the law have not yet maintained a strong and separate interest, powerful enough to put down all improvement! Publicity,—a free press would thus prevent our minds from stagnating, and our local government would gradually assume its proper functions, and would take much of its tone from the opinions of those it ruled. There would be time to do good.

"Lord William Bentinck seems very frank and plain, very inquisitive, and endowed with considerable sagacity; his temper is excellent, I hear. I think he will encourage the press, because he is honest and diligent; clean hands and clear head, 'tis not such who fear publicity. I think he will promote education, and do away the murder of women and children. I think he will admit natives to higher offices of trust, and do away the exclusion of black and coloured men from the administration of justice. He

is the only man I have yet seen in power, who seemed to think as if he thought Patronage was not private property but a trust. Already he has delivered himself very considerably from the trammels of clique, and the bureau here, who usually possess themselves of a new comer, and never leave him till they bring him down to their own level, as opposers of all that is liberal.

"These are no slight éloges, but they are rather prognostics than predictions.

"All happiness attend you, my venerable and dear master.—Yours affectionately and sincerely."

(*Ibid.*, pp. 589-592)

IV

Rammohun Roy brought to England the following Letter of Introduction to Bentham from a highly valued correspondent :—

"Calcutta, 14th November, 1830."

"My dear and venerable friend,—This letter will be presented to you, or transmitted, waiting your leisure, by no less a person than the distinguished Rammohun Roy.

"You have heard of him often from me, and from others, and know that he is one of the most extraordinary productions of the 'march of intellect.' A Brahmin of the highest order, and therefore an aristocrat by birth; one of the privileged class, and a man of easy fortune by inheritance; deeply learned in Sanscrit, Arabic, and everything oriental; he has, nevertheless, unassisted, and of himself, been able to shake off prejudice of almost every kind, and to give his natural understanding fair play.

"If I were beside you, and could explain matters fully, you would comprehend the greatness of this undertaking. His going on board ship to a foreign and distant land—a thing hitherto not to be named among Hindoos, and least of all among Brahmins. His grand object, besides the natural one of satisfying his own laudable spirit of inquiry, has been to set a great example to his benighted countrymen; and every one of the slow and gradual

moves that he has made, preparatory to his actually quitting India, has been marked by the same discretion of judgment. He waited patiently, until he had, by perseverance and exertion, acquired a little but respectable part of disciples. He *talked* of going to England from year to year since 1823, to familiarize the minds of the orthodox by degrees to this step, and that his friends might, in the meantime, increase in numbers and in confidence ; as it was of the utmost importance to the preservation of his rank and influence with the Hindoo community, who care less about *dogmatics* than *observances*, that he should continue one of 'the Pure', and should not be suspected of quitting Hindooism for any consideration of a personal nature. He has externally maintained so much and no more of conformity to Hindoo custom, as his profound knowledge of their sacred books enabled him to justify—relaxing, however, by little and little, yet, however, never enough to justify his being put '*out of the pale*'. I need not say that in private it is otherwise, and that prejudices of all sorts are duly contemned by our philosopher. But so important does he judge it to the efficacy of his example, and the ultimate success of his honourable mission of experiment, that he should maintain the essentials of his Brahminical sanctity—that even in the flagrant and outrageous act of making this voyage and sojourn, he is contriving to preserve appearances to a certain point, which he considers sufficient to *save his Caste*, so that on returning, he may resume his influential position against the abuse and calumnious reports which the whole tribe of bigots will not fail to raise against him while in England, and when he comes back. He now judges that the time is come, and that the public mind is pretty well ripe for his exploit ; and he embarks in two or three days in the *Albion*, for Liverpool ; where he has friends and correspondents in Cropper Benson, and others of liberal feeling.

"The good which this excellent and extraordinary man has already effected by his writings and example, cannot be told. But for his exertions and writings, suttee would be in full vigour at the present day, and the influ-

ence of the priesthood in all its ancient force ; he has given the latter a shake, from which, aided by the education and spirit of bold inquiry gone forth among the rising nations of Hindoos, it never can recover. I need hardly tell you that the liberalism of such a mind is not confined to points of theology or ritual. In all matters involving the progress and happiness of mankind, his opinions are most independent ; and he is, withal, one of the most modest men I ever met with, though near fifty years of age ; and though he is the most learned and enlightened of his countrymen and nation, and indeed has held that position for the last fifteen or twenty years, and has received praises enough to have turned the head of any other man alive.

“It is no small compliment to such a man that even a Governor-general, like the present, who, though a man of the most honest intentions, suspects every one, and trusts nobody, and who knows that R.M.R. greatly disapproves of many acts of government, should have shown him so much respect as to furnish him with introductions to friends of rank, and political and *Indian* influence. Either they will find him intractable, and throw him off, or they will succeed in what no one hitherto has succeeded—in beguiling or bending the stranger.

“A stranger, however, he is, and of such sort as has not before appeared among you ; and he will stand in need, doubtless, of all the kindness and attention that friends here can procure for him. You have weightier and other matters to occupy you ; nor are your habits such as to enable you to be of service to R.M.R. in the ordinary way. Yet I felt assured you would like to see and converse with my Indian friend ; and, indeed, I recollect you expressed such a wish. For the rest, you will probably make him over with his credential to our friend, Bowring, and the reprobates, and Stanhope.

“I most truly rejoice to hear and to see printed proofs that you continue to enjoy your accustomed health, strength, and *spirits*. No one among all whom you know wishes more truly and earnestly than I, that you may conti-

nue to enjoy those blessings for the sake of us all.—Your affectionate and attached friend.”

(*Ibid.* Vol. XI. pp. 58-60)

V

In 1831, Bentham took an active part in the formation of the Parliamentary Candidate Society. Its object was to direct public attention to the men who were most likely to forward the popular interests in the House of Commons. Among the parties who Bentham was desirous of recommending, were Rammohun Roy, as a representative of British India, a half caste, and a negro, in order to subdue the prejudices of colour, and to hold out encouragement and hope to the rest of these races. Bentham wrote, on this occasion, credentials for some of his acquaintance, many of whom, so recommended, found their way into Parliament on the passing of the Reform Bill.

(*Ibid.*, p. 66)

Appendix IV.

New-Hinduism, properly speaking applies only to themovement, led by Babu Bankimchandra Chatterji as its theologian and constructive thinker. Babu Chandra-nath Bose, as its miscellaneous essayist and critic, and Babu Navinchandra Sen, as its epic poet. Said Chateaubriand....“I am a Bourbonist in honour, a monarchist by conviction and a republican by temperament and disposition;” and in this country in need of an equally comprehensive plea, stands no doubt the thinker who contributed to its literature of illumination an article entitled Mill, Darwin and the Hindu Religion, another headed by Miranda, Desdemona and Sakuntala, an exposition of the Sankhya Philosophy and a pamphlet on Samya (*Egalite*), once the leader of the vanguard of emancipation and deliverance, now the Balaam of the children of Moab, and we may say too Philistia!

Navajivana (the new life), a journal which was started as the organ of neo-Hinduism, suggests, by its very title, the working of that impulse which led Hardenberg, the rhapsodist ... to call himself Novalis. Many of the articles

in the journal on the Puranic gods and goddesses, on Hindu Pantheism and Ethics, on Hindu festivals, ceremonies and customs, illustrate that grotesque and incongruous blending of the physical with the spiritual which in Germany reached its apex in Novalis' disciples at Sais. A hopeless sterility, a blank, stunned stare, an incongruous mysticism, a jelly-fish structure of brain heart, are the characteristic features of this hybrid literature of power and the literature of knowledge the Coryphaeus of this movement, . . . is Babu Bankim Chandra Chatterji. His essays on Religion and exposition of the *Bhagaratgita* published in the two journals, *Navajivana* and *Prachara*, form the gospel of this new propaganda. What strikes the reader familiar with the European religious movements of our age, is the fact that Babu Bankimchandra Chatterji's religious teaching is an attempt to reconcile the conflicting elements of many of these movements within the pale of Hinduism, somewhat in the same manner as Baring-Gould, in tracing the origin and development of religious belief, finds the different physical, social and spiritual needs of man that are gratified by the different heathen religions, and even such superstitions as Fetchism, Shamanism, Taoism, all embraced within the fold of Christianity. In this meeting-ground of incongruities, here held up in perspective, one recognises Pantheism and Agnosticism, Gnosticism and Justification by Faith, and the Gospel of Work and Prayer, Church Authority and Individual Judgement, Free Will and Fate, Progress and Order, Spiritual Worship and Avatarism, Historic Religions and Evolution, Hindu Nationalism and cosmic Propagandism, the Material Civilisation of the West and the Spiritual Renunciation of the East. Evidently the views on man and the universe held by thinkers like Mill, Spencer, and Darwin, have vitally affected the author's interpretation of Hindu religion and philosophy; but the profoundest influence of all has been that of Auguste Comte, whose Positive Polity and Religion unconsciously appear in almost everything that our author has to say on domestic, social and political ideals and institutions, and the creation or conservation of national life (especially in his novels *Devi Chaudhurani* and

Annada Matha). It is only meet that the Brahmin theologian of our day should return that profound admiration which the founder of Positivism entertained for some aspects of the Brahminical organisation of society.

From a purely speculative point of view, or regarded as a sketch of a theological system, the new teaching can hardly stand the test of criticism. But this is not altogether a fatal objection. For religious movements ... are not bound to be scientific, and, it may be added with equal truth, they are not bound to be logical. In other words, it is not logical analysis, but the synthesis of life which logic is unable to accomplish; not reason, but obedience; not the understanding, but the religious organ of veneration, dependence, a sense of the Infinite, or some spiritual instinct or craving, that the *historic religions* profess to gratify; and it is, therefore, as absurd to reject religious discipline, because it is not a demonstrated philosophical system, or an inductively established scientific doctrine as it would be to turn away from Virgil's Aeneid because Virgil is unhistorical and commits the ethnological blunder of tracing Roman descent from the Trojans, or, with the mathematician, to demolish Milton's Paradise Lost by triumphantly asking what it proves after all We have now systems of philosophy culminating in religion, the systems of Hegel and Schopenhauer, Comte and Spencer, which aim at replacing the narrower conception of the historic religions by a wider and more comprehensive religion in consonance with the science of the age. It would be worse than fatuity to mention Babu Bankimchandra Chatterji's attempt in the same breath with those of world-building forces; it moves within the narrower sphere of the religious consciousness, and has no pretensions to being considered other than a *religious discipline* or *rule of life*. A historic reconstruction of the origins of Hinduism is attempted by the Brahmin theologian; but, in point of massive learning, power of intuition, or devination, a disciplined historic sense and a comprehensive historic method, it is slight, and beneath a moment's comparison with the reconstruction of the canonical writings, or of the Life of Christ, attempted by Strauss, Baur, or Renan.

The fact is that Theological propaedeutic, even a preliminary training in the modern historico-exegetical methods, is sadly wanting to the Brahmin Leader of neo-Hindu revival. The Krishna of the Mahabharata, which Babu Bankimchandra Chatterji's religious reconstruction brings before us, is an entirely different portrait in central conception and design from the Christ of Strauss, or even of the New Tübingen school. But this Krishna is exactly such a figure of ancient Indian history as would have delighted De Maistre's soul, offering one more illustration of his fundamental political teaching as to the origin of society or political communities being always supernatural and shrouded in mystery, a dim pre-historic vista, peopled with moving shapes and looming phantoms of half divine heroes and legislators, the Avatars of future tradition. (*New Essays in Criticism* by Brajendranath Seal. Calcutta: 1903. pp. 89-95).

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